



VOL. 1

#0

COVER A

MICHAEL TURNER'S FATHOM KIVANIL



Reb. f.

VOLUME ONE Issue Zero

VINCE HERNANDEZ

— Story

MARCUS TO

— Pencils

DON HO

— Inks

PETER STEIGERWALD

— Colors

DREAMER DESIGN

— Letters



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Digital Editors: FRANK MASTROMAURO, VINCE HERNANDEZ Design and Production: JOSH REED, MARK ROSLAN, PETER STEIGERWALD Lettering font designed by: DREAMER DESIGN

FOR ASPEN:

Founder: MICHAEL TURNER President: FRANK MASTROMAURO Vice President: PETER STEIGERWALD Editor in Chief: VINCE HERNANDEZ Editorial Assistant: JOSH REED
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MICHAEL TURNER'S FATHOM: KIANI™ Vol. 1 Issue 0

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SOMEWHERE IN
THE PACIFIC OCEAN.

I FELT TRULY ALIVE.

I KNEW IT WAS THE ANGER
DEEP INSIDE ME, FORCING
ITS WAY OUT.

CLOUDING MY JUDGMENT,
SEIZING CONTROL OF MY
ACTIONS.

I CRAVED THE RELEASE,
THE CHANCE TO UNLEASH
MY NEWFOUND POWERS ON
THE ATTACKING HUMANS...

...AND SET FREE THE
ANGER I'VE HELD
DOWN FOR SO LONG.

NOW HOWEVER,
ANOTHER EMOTION
BLINDS MY THOUGHTS...



...GRIEF.

I COULD ALWAYS MANAGE THE ANGER WITHIN ME. FEED OFF THE ADRENALINE IT PROVIDED.

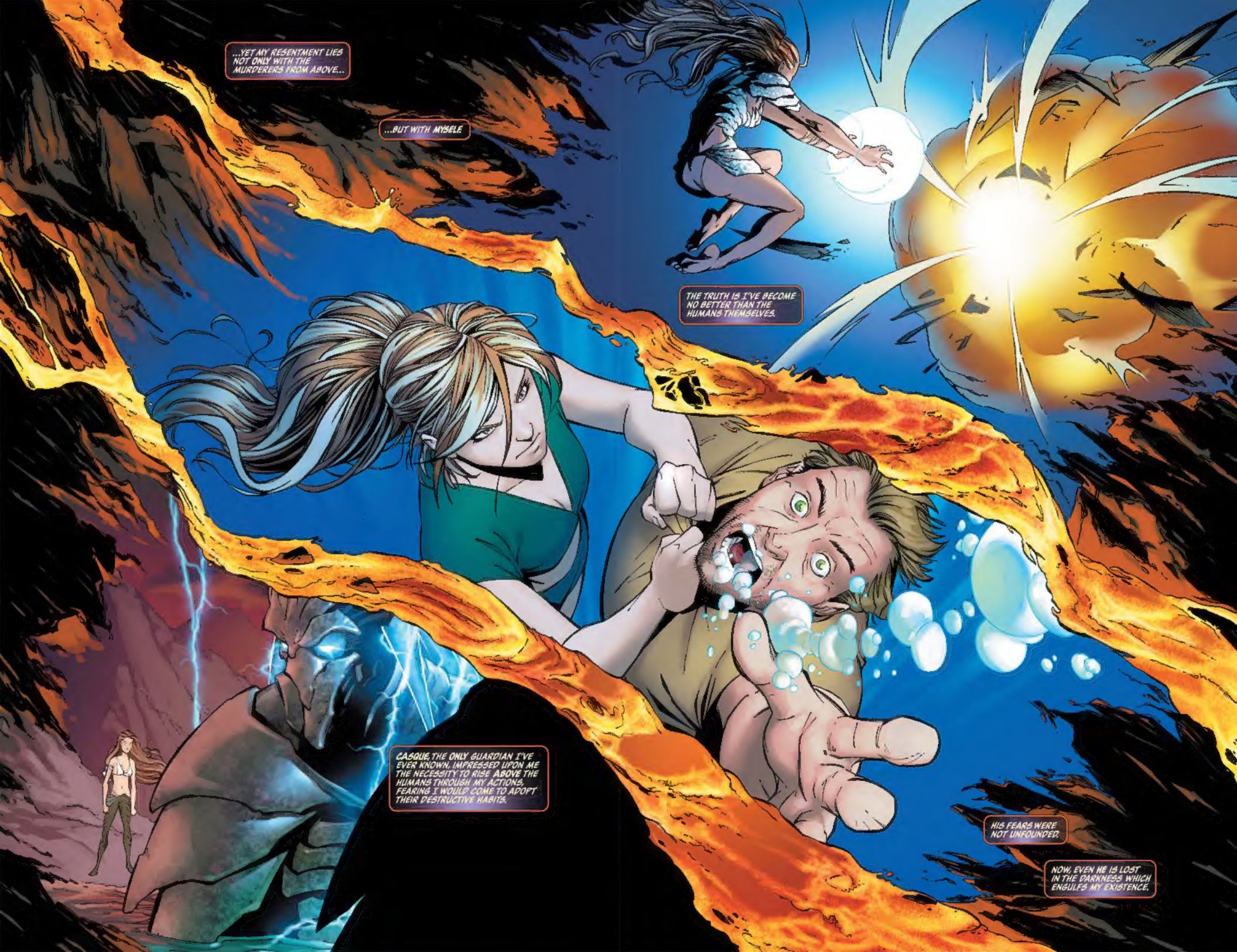
BUT...THIS...

...THIS MASSACRE...

...IT EATS AWAY AT ME TEARING A WOUND GREATER THAN ANY HUMAN WEAPON EVER COULD.

COMMAND, THIS IS ELITE 213. WE'VE LOCATED THE CAPTAIN'S POSITION. OUR RETURN COURSE IS CHARTED. BRINGING HER BACK TO MURIA CENTRAL. 213 OUT.

MY ANGER SHOULD BE CENTERED ON THE HUMANS WHO'VE CREATED THIS DEATH AND DESTRUCTION...



...YET MY RESENTMENT LIES
NOT ONLY WITH THE
MURDERERS FROM ABOVE...

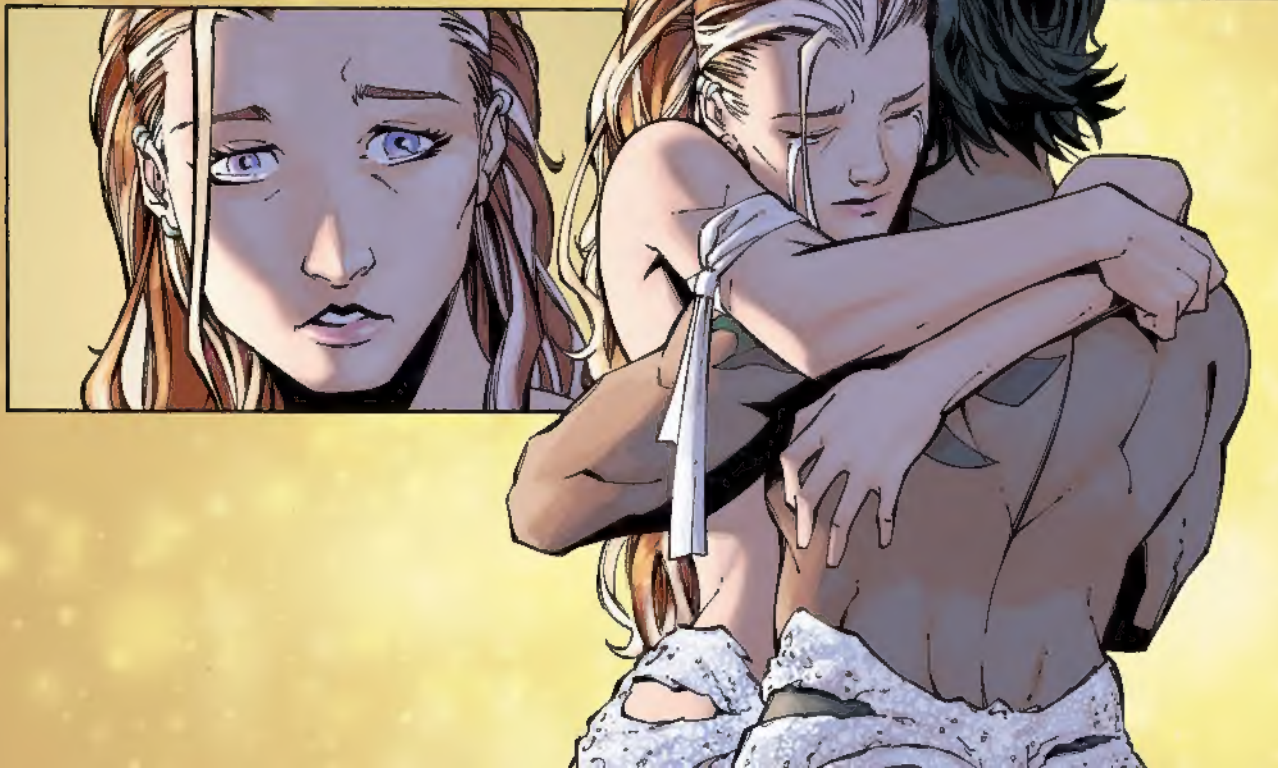
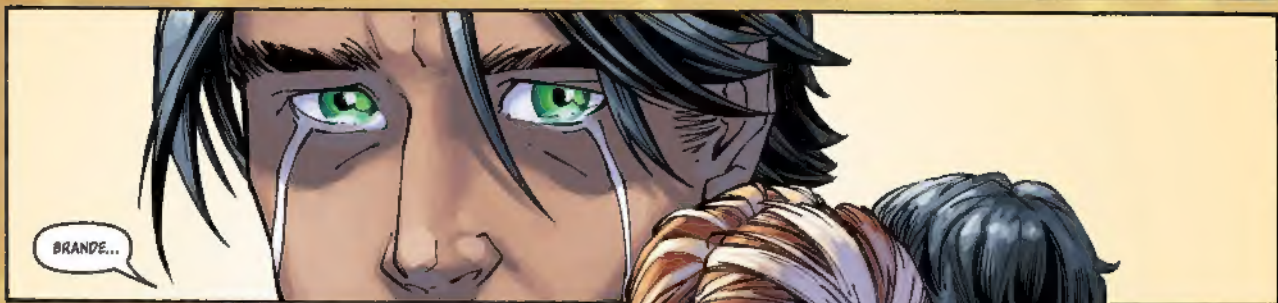
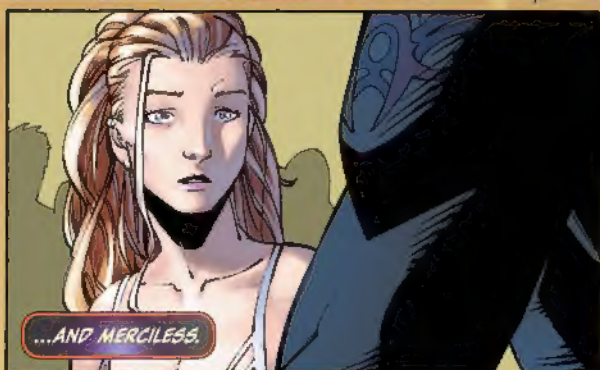
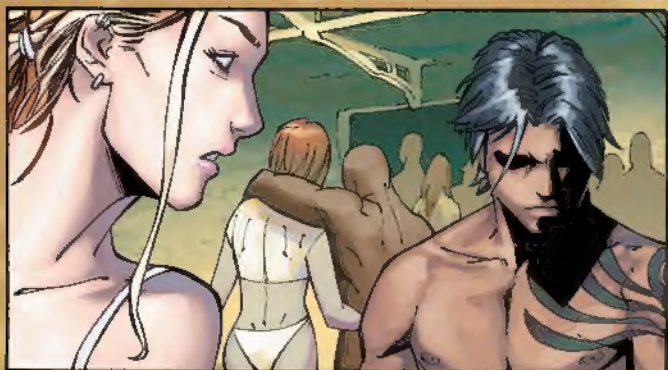
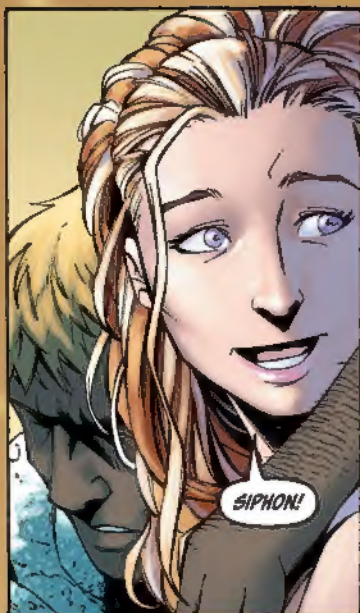
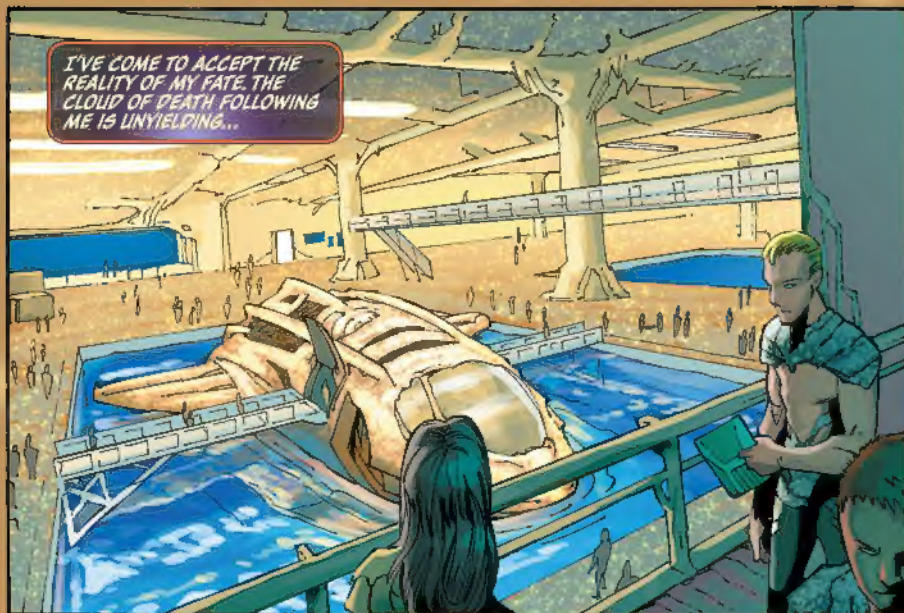
...BUT WITH MYSELF

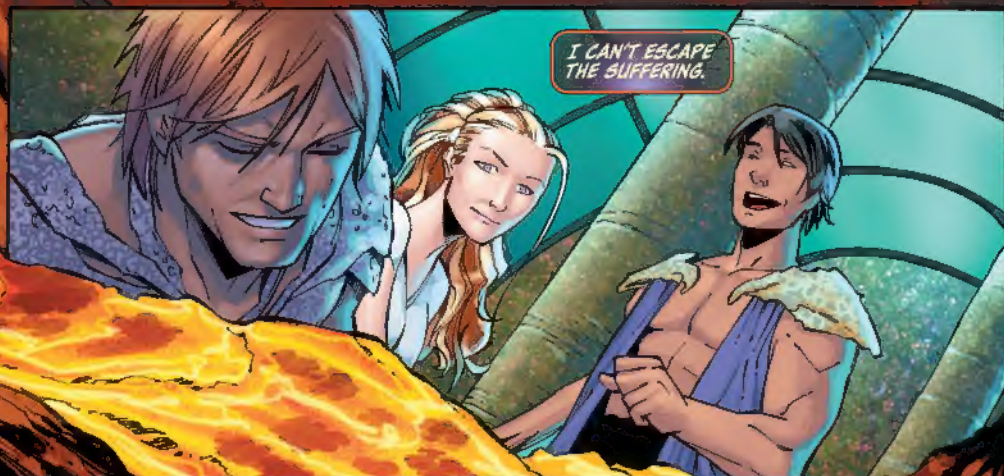
THE TRUTH IS I'VE BECOME
NO BETTER THAN THE
HUMANS THEMSELVES.

CASQUE THE ONLY GUARDIAN I'VE
EVER KNOWN, IMPRESSED UPON ME
THE NECESSITY TO RISE ABOVE THE
HUMANS THROUGH MY ACTIONS,
FEARING I WOULD COME TO ADOPT
THEIR DESTRUCTIVE HABITS.

HIS FEARS WERE
NOT UNFOUNDED.

NOW, EVEN HE IS LOST
IN THE DARKNESS WHICH
ENGULFS MY EXISTENCE.



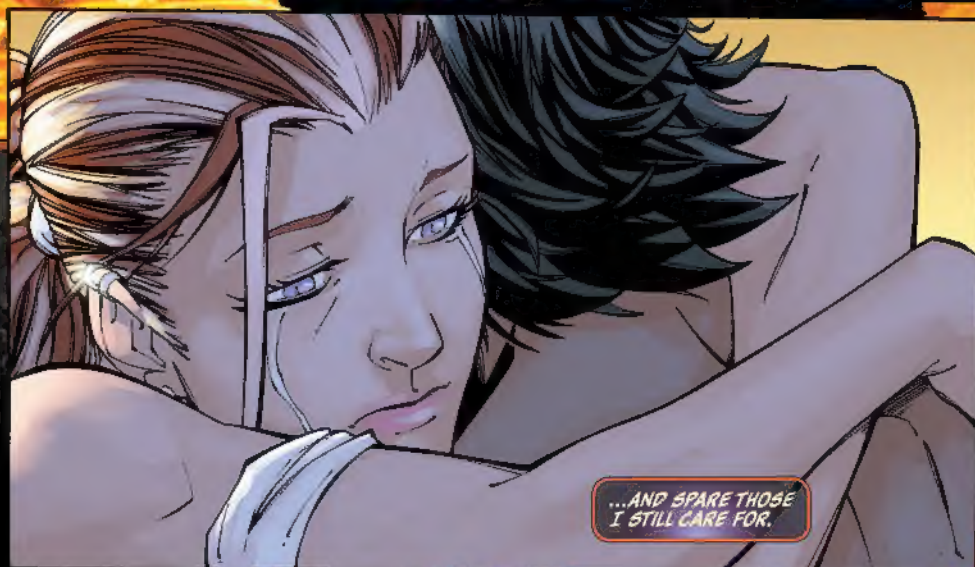


I CAN'T ESCAPE
THE SUFFERING.



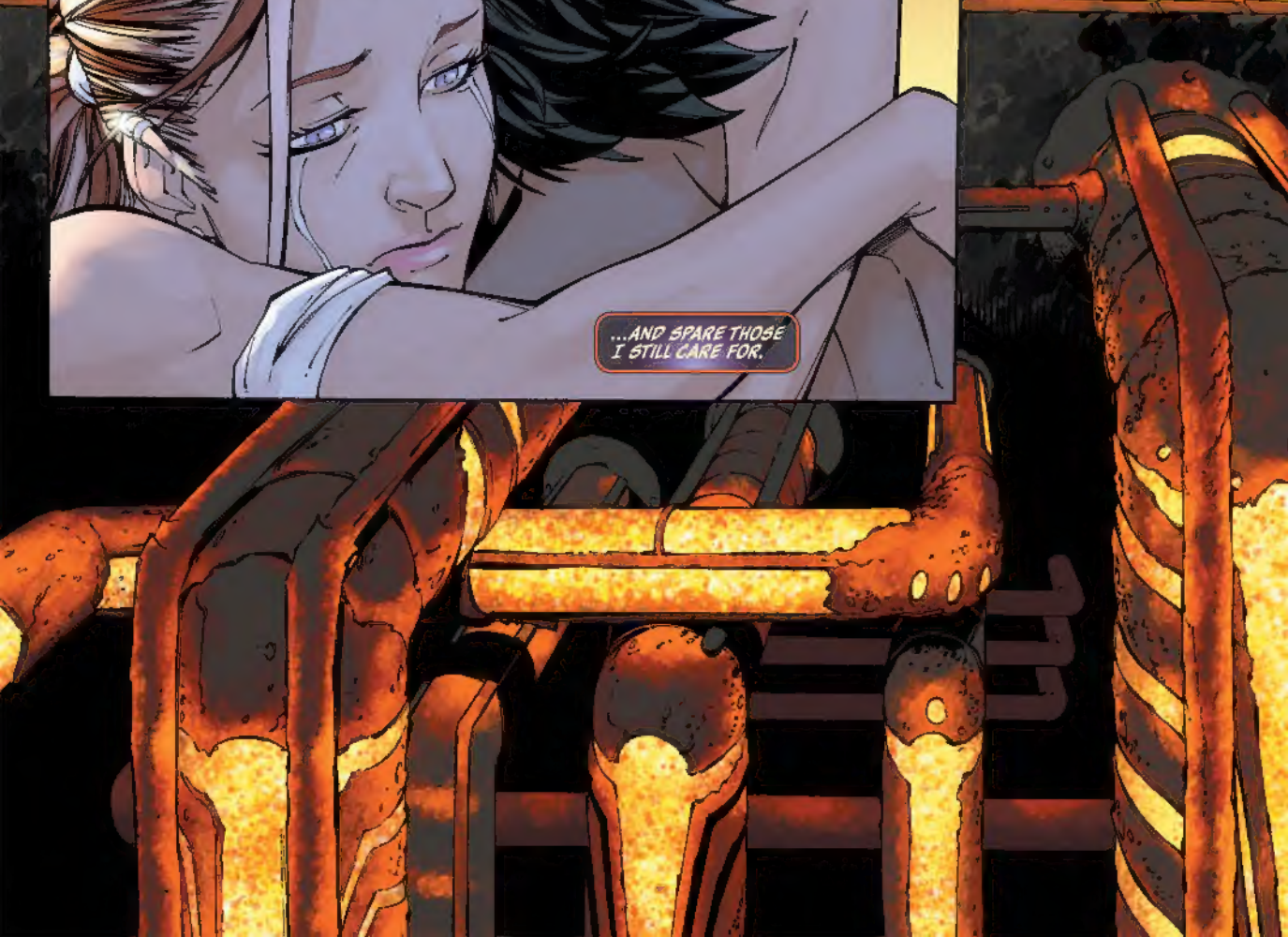
THIS BECAME APPARENT
WITH BRAND'S PASSING.*

BUT I CAN ESCAPE
MY EXISTENCE...



...AND SPARE THOSE
I STILL CARE FOR.

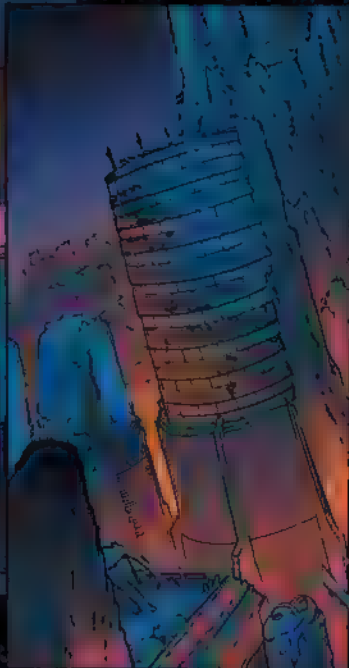
*SEE FATHOM VOL. 2
FOR MORE DETAILS.





THE POWER WITHIN ME,
IT BURNS GREATER
THAN BEFORE...





AND I MUST
GET HOME

TO BE
CONTINUED...

ASPEN
Vol. 1

#1

OF 4
COVER A

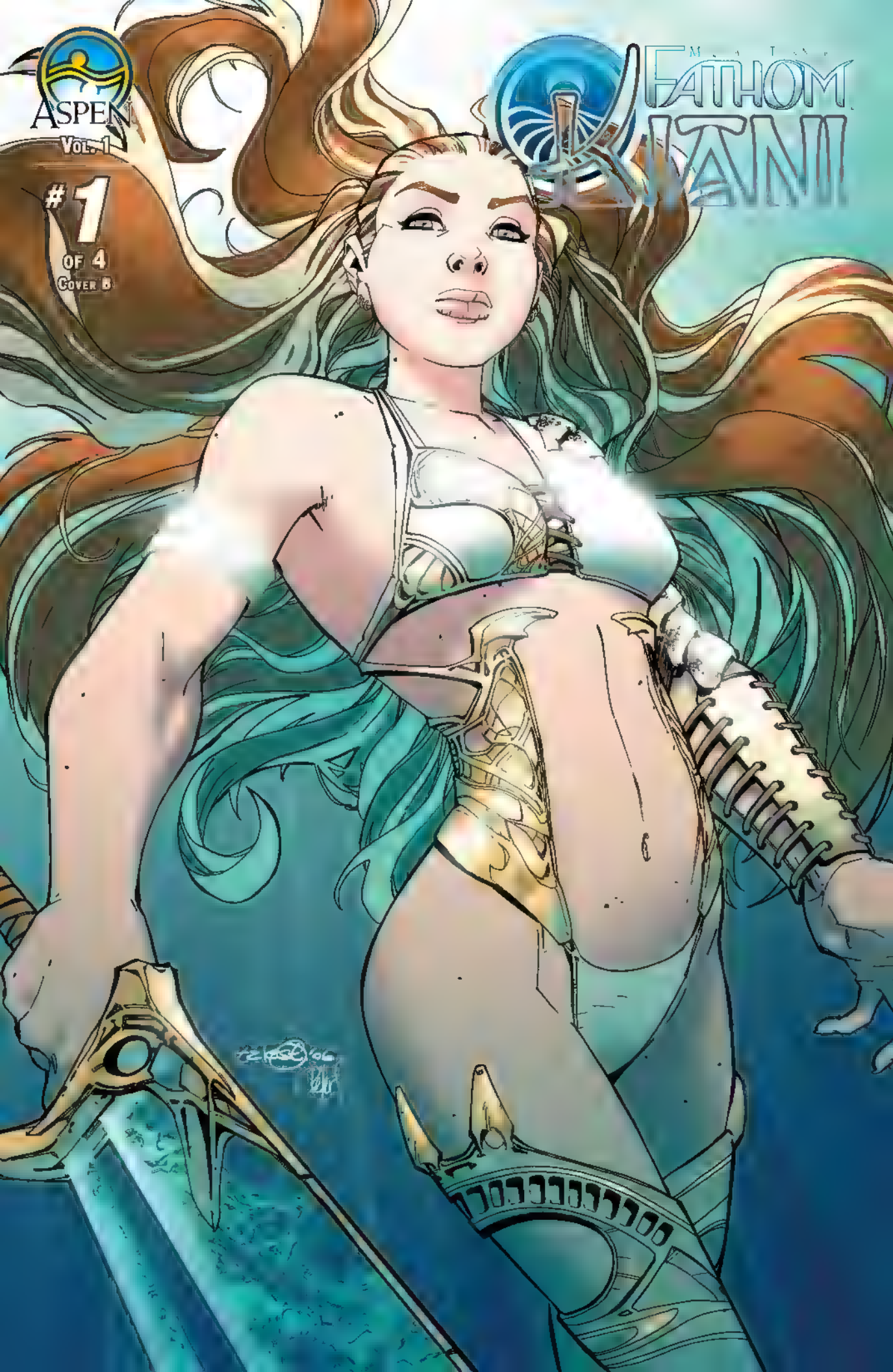
MICHAEL TURNER'S
FATHOM
IANI



ASPEN
Vol. 1

#1
OF 4
COVER B

FATHOM
IANI



VOLUME ONE Issue One of Four

VINCE HERNANDEZ

Story

MARCO TO

Art

DON HO, JASON GORDIER, FRED DE LOS SANTOS, AND SAL REGLA

Art

PETER STEIGERWALD, DAVID MORÁN

Colors

DREAMER DESIGN

Lettering



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I ONCE ASPIRED TO
DWELL IN THIS PLACE.

I AM NOT
ALONE.

EVERY WARRIOR SWORN
INTO THE ELITE SECURITY
FORCE YEARNS FOR
REVERENCE BORN OF
PROTECTING THE BLINK.

TO SACRIFICE ONESELF
FOR SUCH A CAUSE IS
CONSIDERED NOBLE.

I ONCE ASPIRED TO
DWELL IN THIS PLACE.

CAPTAIN.

...NOW I CAN BARELY
DRAW UPON THE
COURAGE TO ENTER IT.

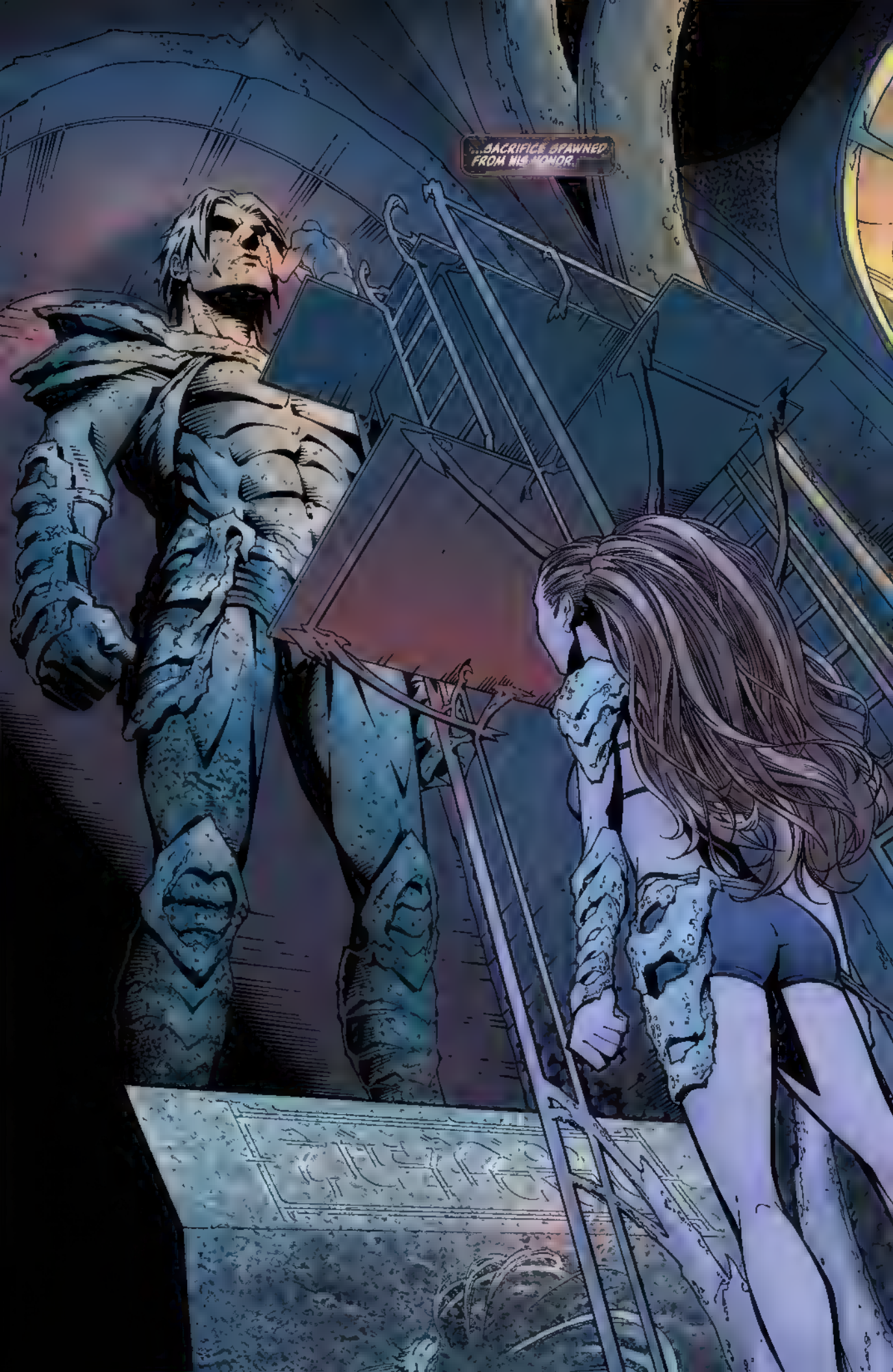
TO CELEBRATE THE LIFE OF ELENOR,
THE FIRST ELITE GENERAL TO FALL TO
THE BLADE OF NANCERAS, THE
ANCIENT BLUE CONSTRUCTED THE
RISCITILLA UPON THE STAINED REEF
OF HIS FINAL BATTLEGROUND.

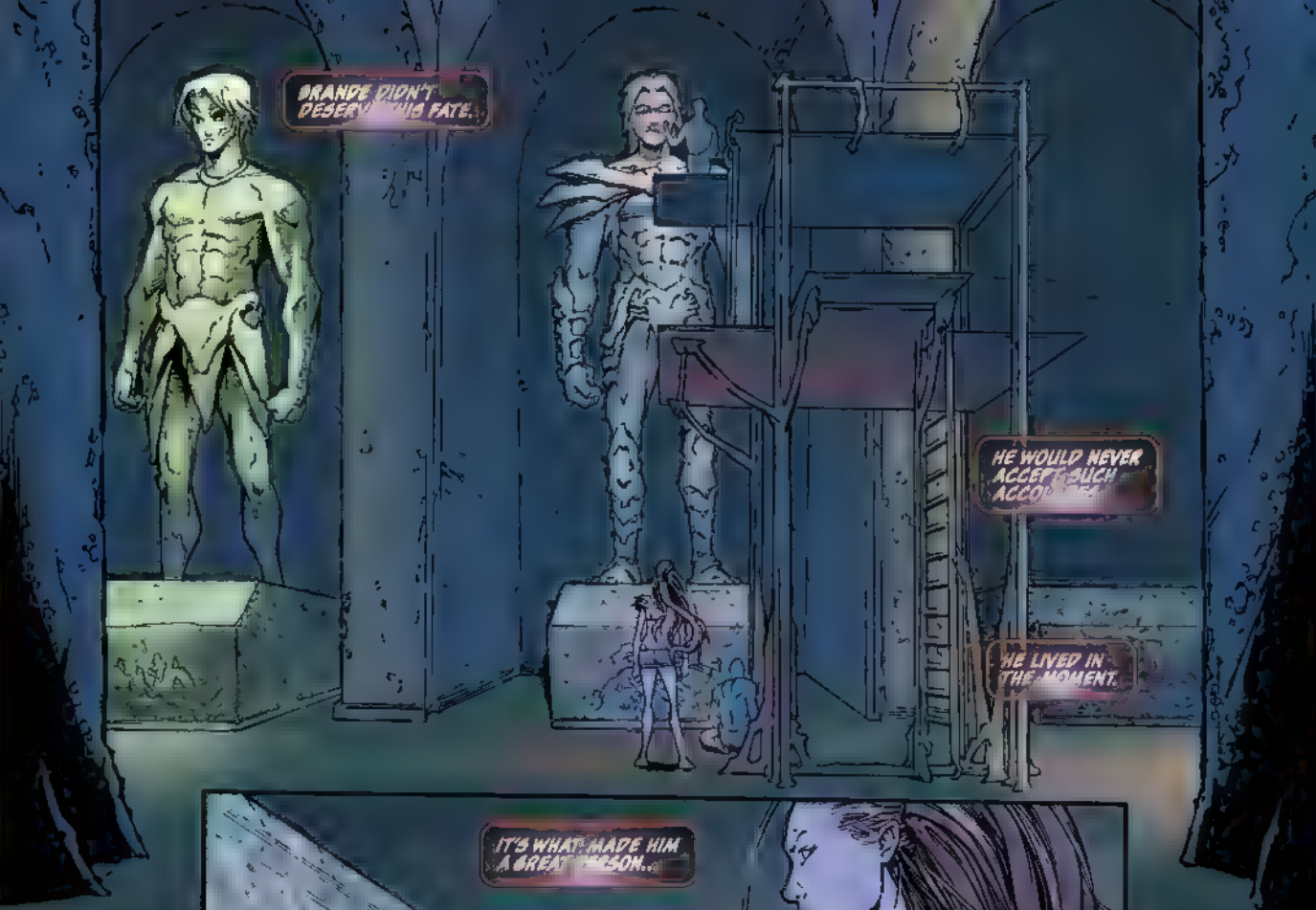
IT IS A TRIBUTE TO THE
HONOR AND FATAL
SACRIFICE UNDERTAKEN BY
MEMBERS OF THE ELITE
COUNCIL'S SPECIAL FORCE

HONOR SPAWNED FROM
THEIR SACRIFICE.

...OR RATHER...

SACRIFICE SPAWNED
FROM HIS HONOR.

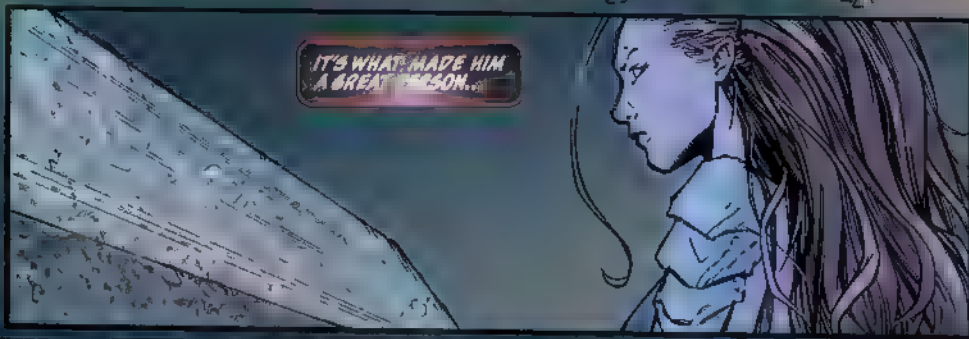




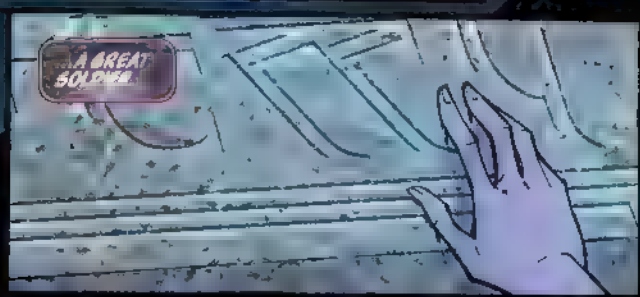
BRANDE DIDN'T
DESERVE HIS FATE...

HE WOULD NEVER
ACCEPT SUCH
ACCOUNTS...

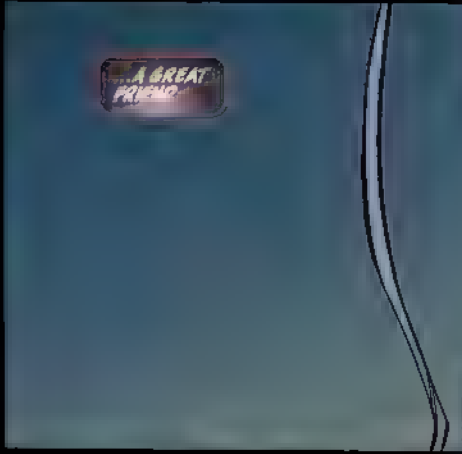
HE LIVED IN
THE MOMENT.



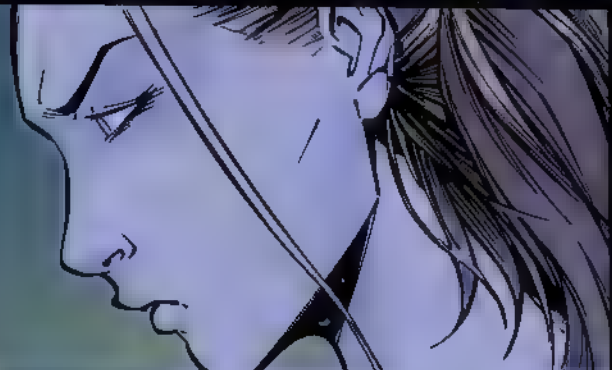
IT'S WHAT MADE HIM
A GREAT PERSON...

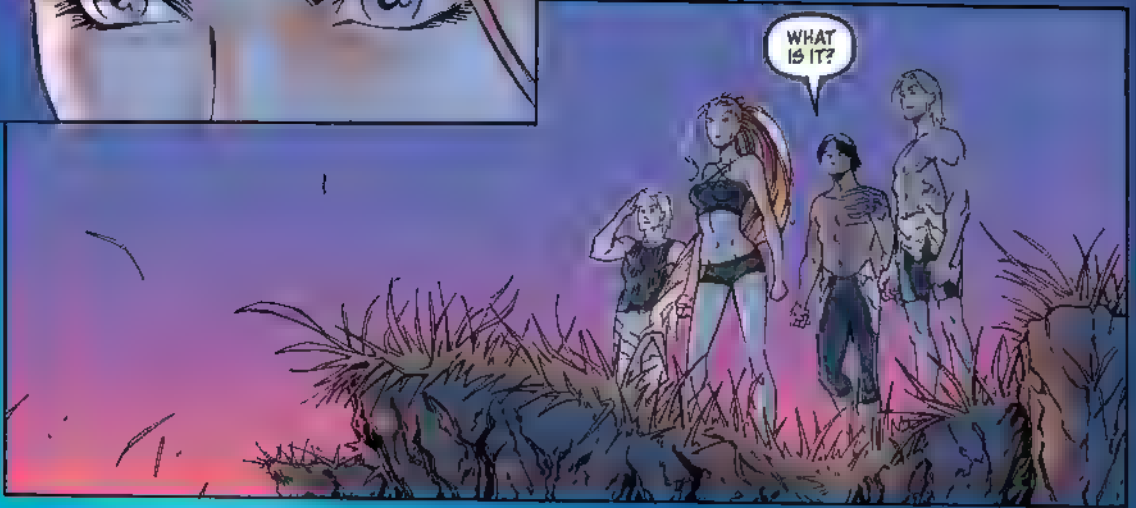
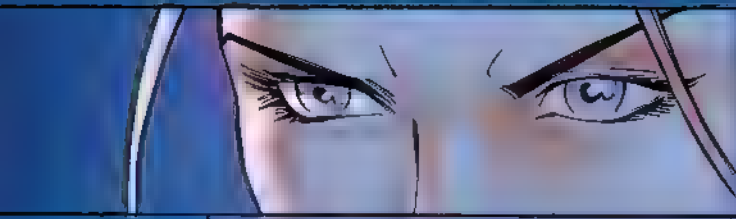


A GREAT
SOLDIER

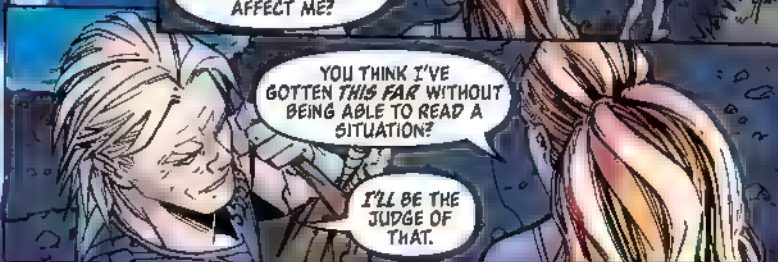
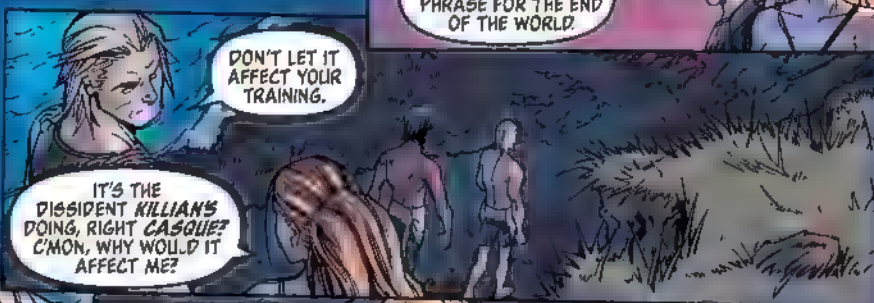
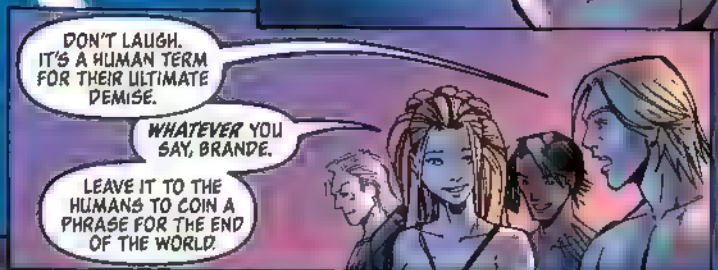


A GREAT
FRIEND

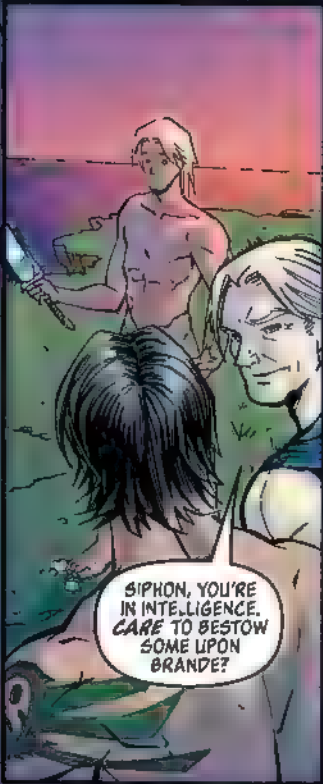
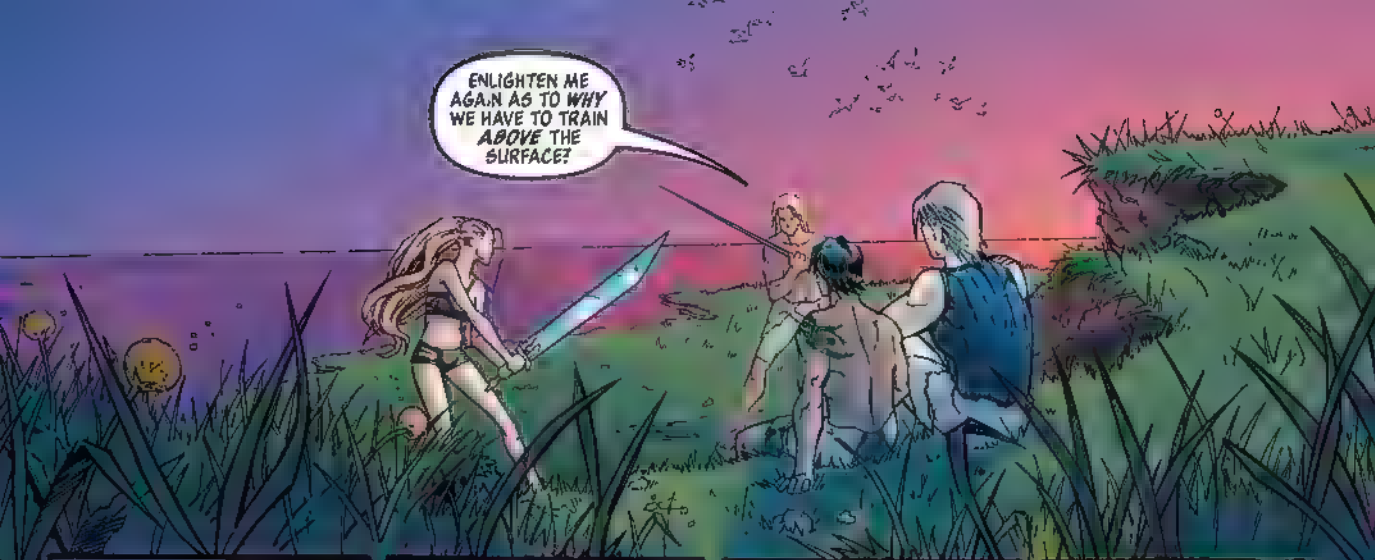




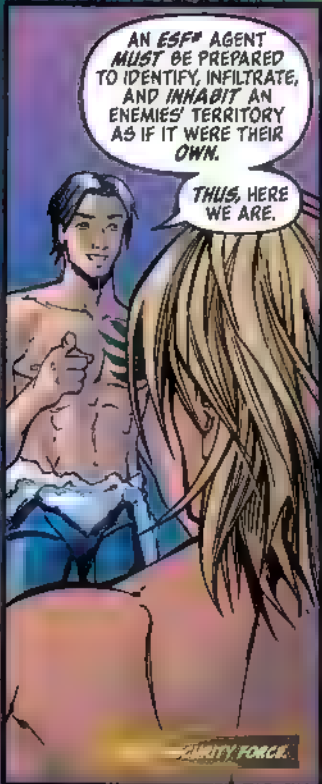
EN.



ENLIGHTEN ME AGAIN AS TO WHY WE HAVE TO TRAIN ABOVE THE SURFACE?

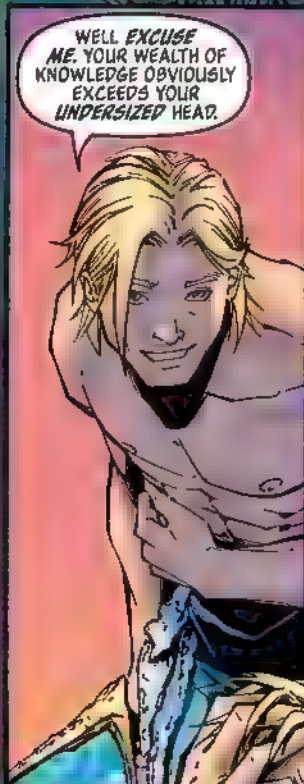


SIPHON, YOU'RE IN INTELLIGENCE. CARE TO BESTOW SOME UPON BRANDE?



AN ESF AGENT MUST BE PREPARED TO IDENTIFY, INFILTRATE, AND INHABIT AN ENEMIES' TERRITORY AS IF IT WERE THEIR OWN.

THUS, HERE WE ARE.

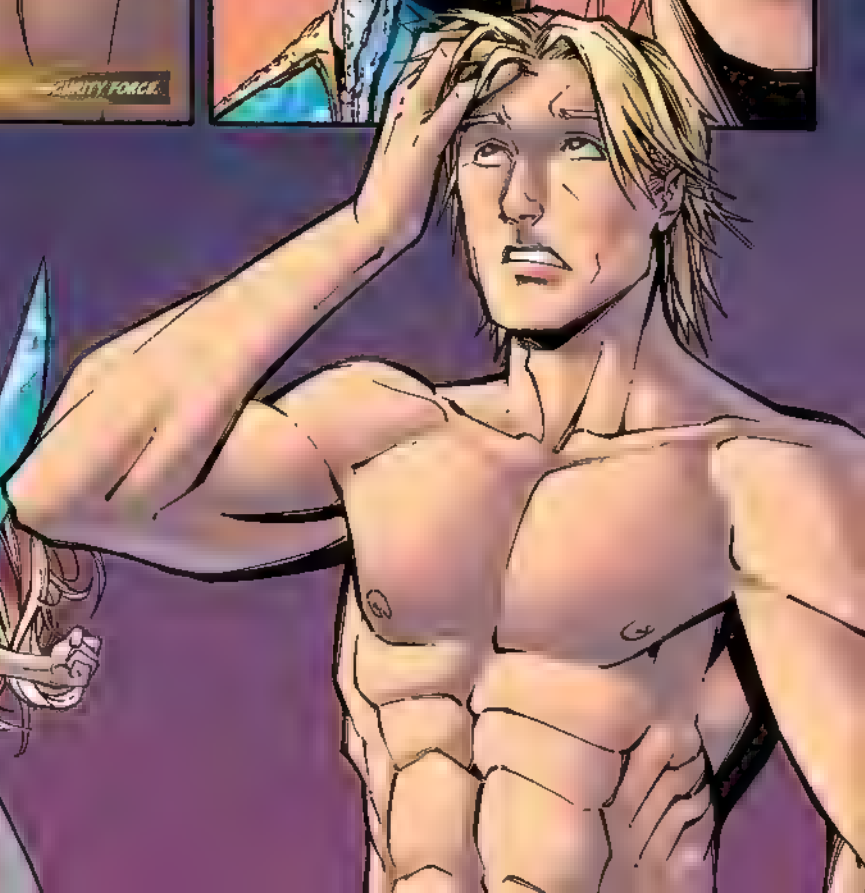
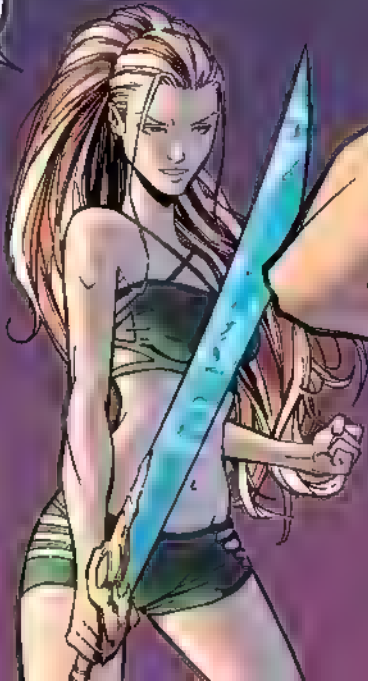


WE'LL EXCUSE ME. YOUR WEALTH OF KNOWLEDGE OBVIOUSLY EXCEEDS YOUR UNDERSIZED HEAD.



WHOOOF

AND NOW YOUR HEAD'S A BIT LIGHTER TO MATCH.





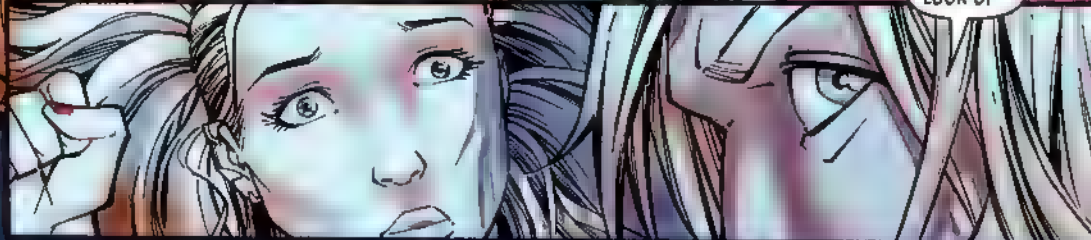
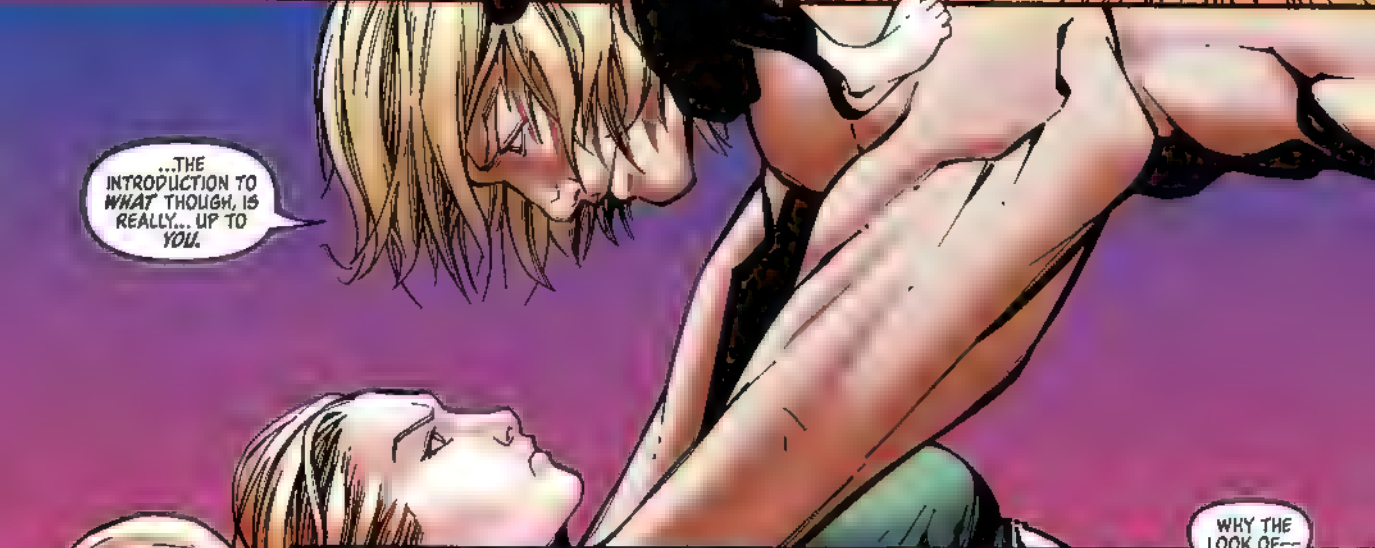
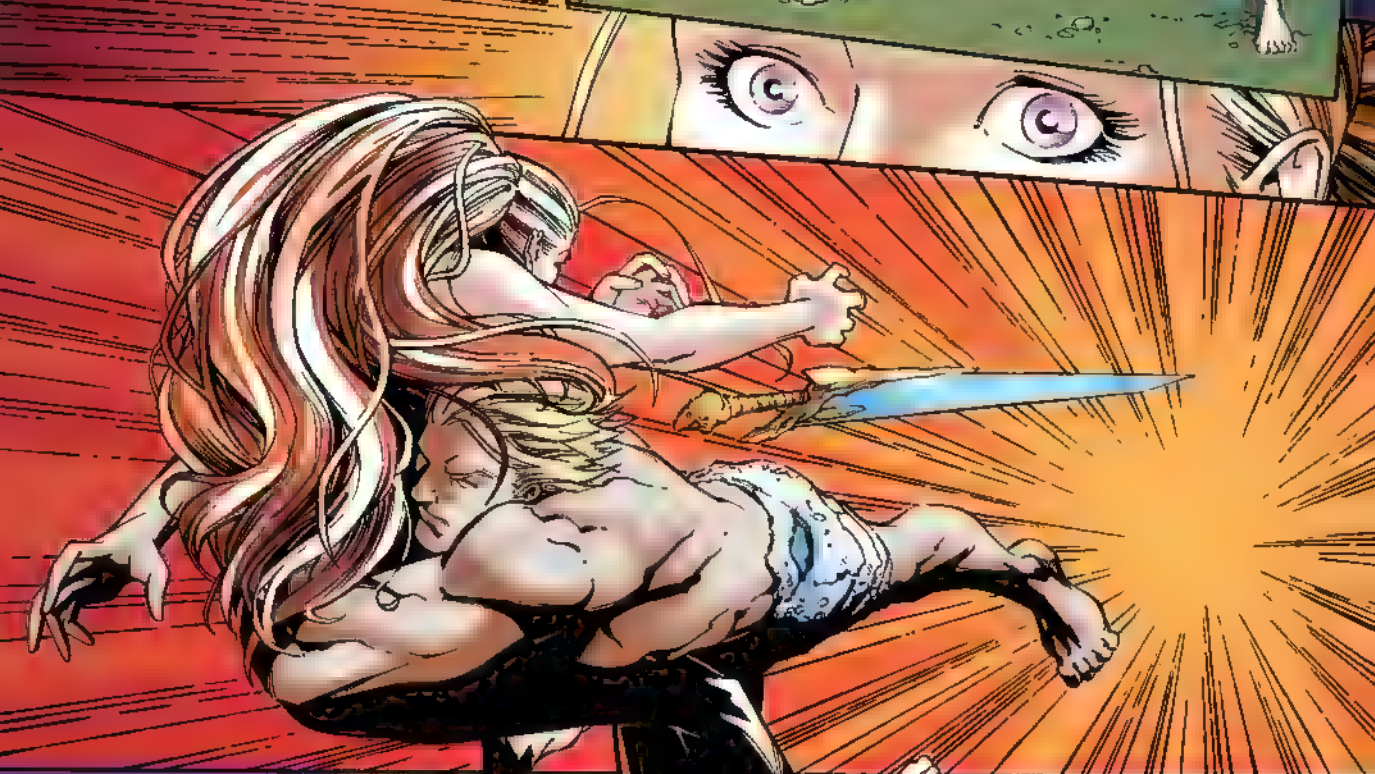
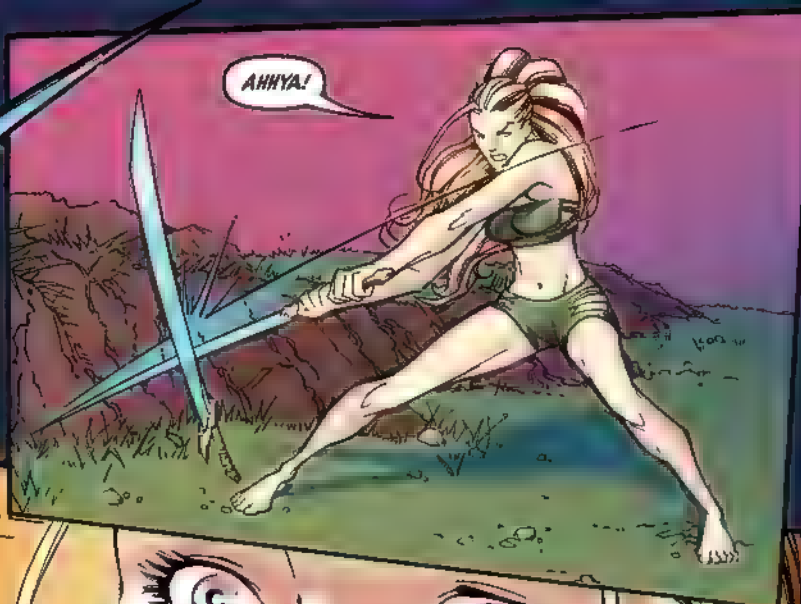
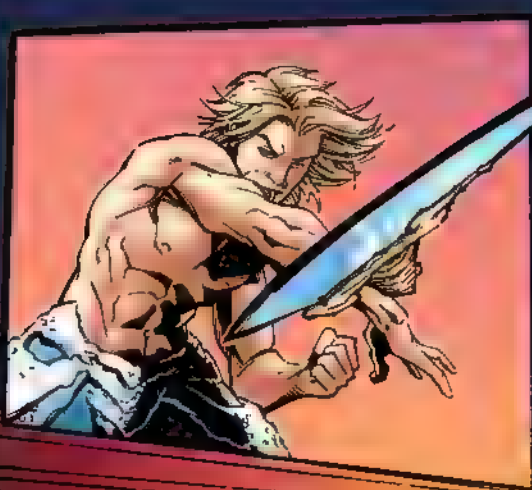
OH IT IS *ON*.
NOW, YOU BETTER
PROTECT THOSE
PRECIOUS RED LOCKS
OF YOURS!

HIYAAA!!

YOU CALL THAT
A LEAD?

UHH... NO--

--I CALL IT THE
INTRODUCTION...





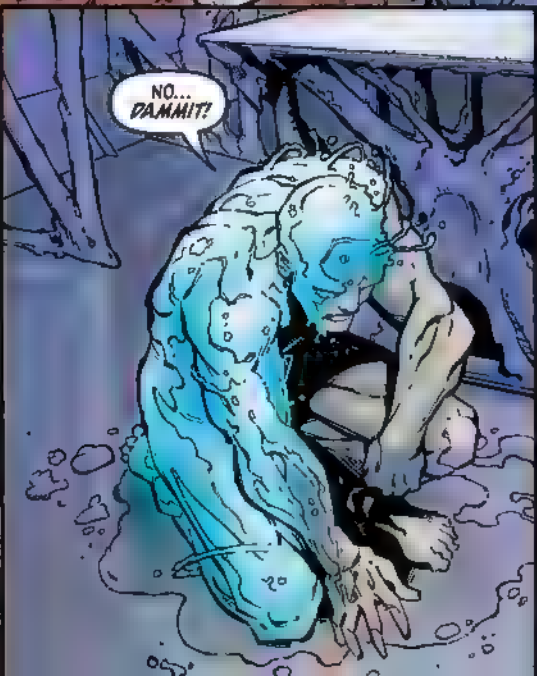
KIAN!! STAND
BACK!



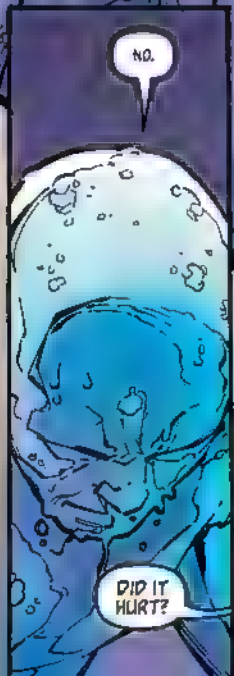


HOW

HOLD...
...C'MON!
KEEP FORM!



NO...
DAMMIT!



NO.

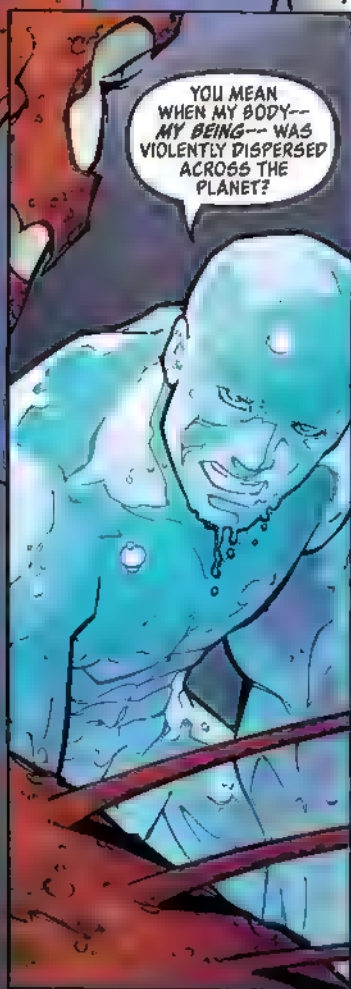
DID IT
HURT?



WERE YOU NOT
JUST WITNESS,
TERZA?

NO.

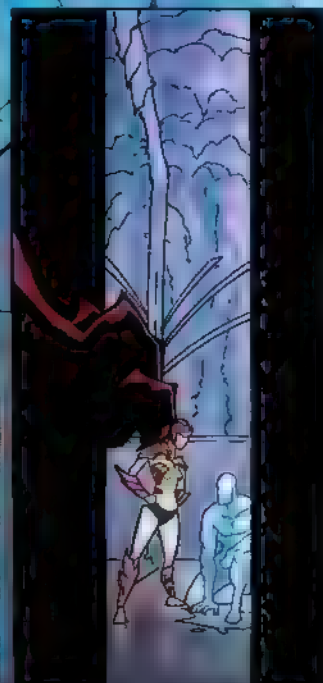
THAT'S NOT
WHAT I MEANT. THE
UH... THE *BLUE SUN*.
WHEN... WHEN YOU...
UH... EXPLODED.



YOU MEAN
WHEN MY BODY--
MY BEING-- WAS
VIOLENTLY DISPERSED
ACROSS THE
PLANET?



YES, I FELT...
PAIN. BUT IT *PALES*
IN COMPARISON TO THE
SICKENING HUMILIATION
OF BEING *STUCK* IN
THIS FORM.



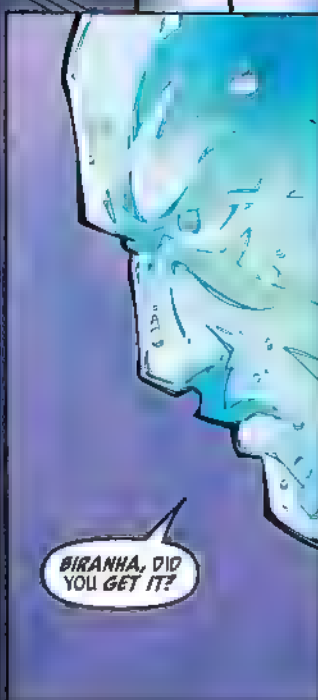


THERE'S A PROBLEM.



I TAKE IT YOU WERE UNSUCCESSFUL?

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND.



BIRANHA, DID YOU GET IT?



NO...



WE NEVER
STOOD A CHANCE.



IN AND OUT!
THAT'S THE NAME OF
THE GAME SOLDIERS. WE
OBTAIN THE GRAY
MATTER AND WE
MOVE OUT!!



THE MISSION TO RETRIEVE WHAT YOU SEEK
WAS COMPLETELY A SHOT IN THE DARK.
OUR ONLY AVAILABLE INTELLIGENCE IS
THAT THE CITY IS OFF THE RADAR IN THE
MOST REMOTE, UNCHARTED WATERS.

OUR SOURCE DID
GIVE US A TRAIL.

BUT THE ONLY REALISTIC
GEOGRAPHICAL OPTION
INTO THEIR MAIN
CHANNEL IS UP THROUGH
THE DEPTHS OF THE CITY.

OUR VEHICLES—OUR
BODIES—ARE NOT BUILT
TO WITHSTAND SUCH
BLISTERING CONDITIONS.



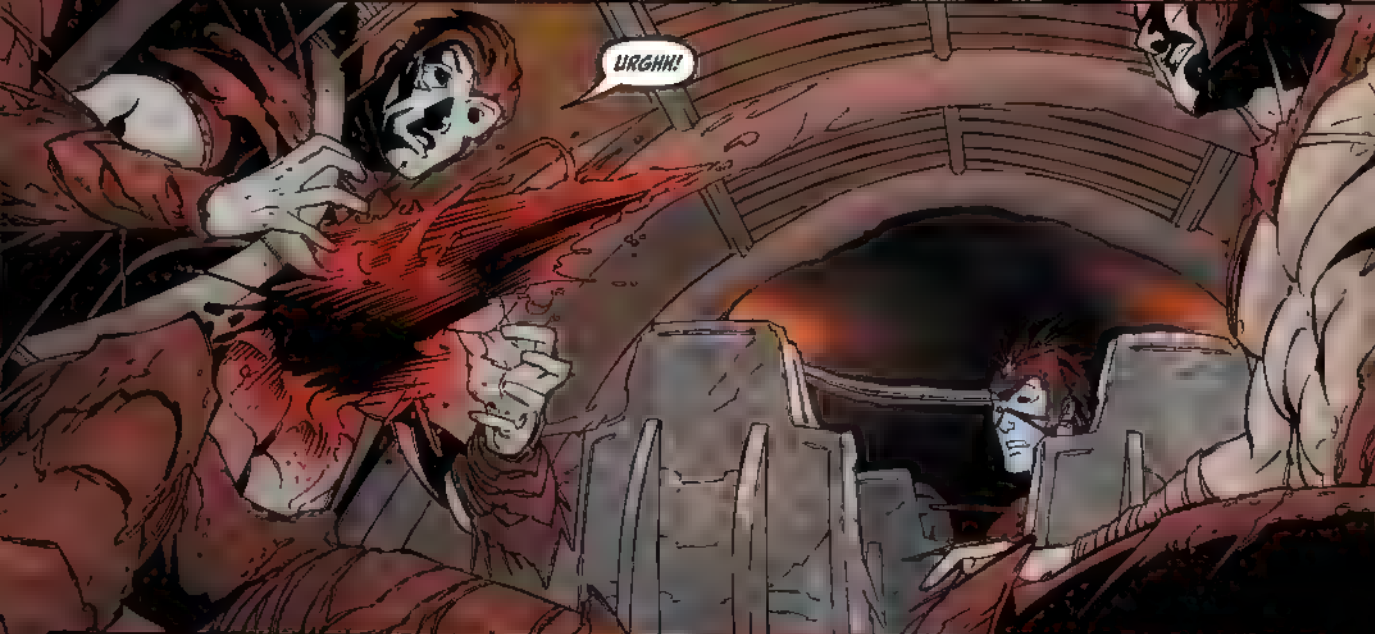
YET, THERE WE WERE.
ALMOST AT THE POINT
OF ENTRY. SO CLOSE...
BEFORE—



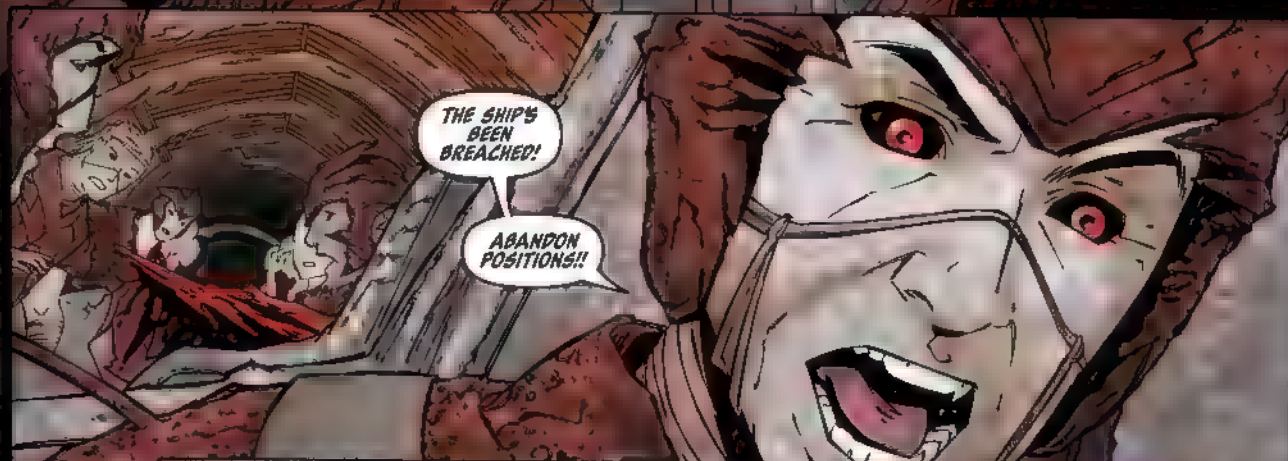
INCOMING!!!



SKRRREEEEEE



URGH!!

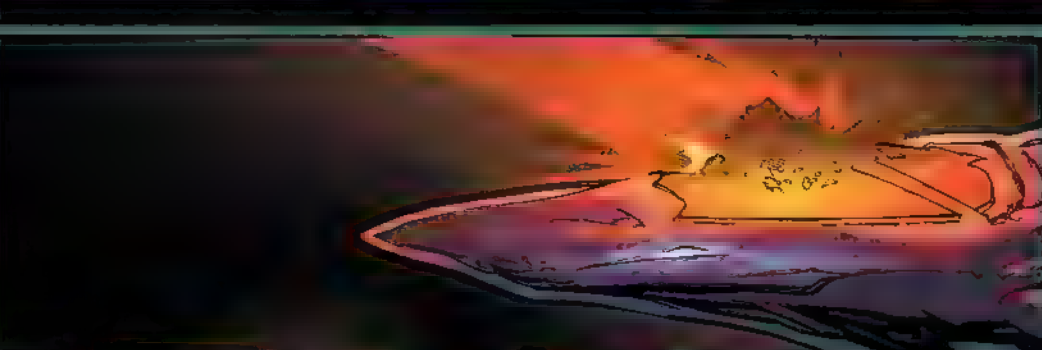


THE SHIP'S
BEEN
BREACHED!

ABANDON
POSITIONS!!



OH...



THE EXPLOSION
NEARLY TOOK MY
CONSCIOUSNESS...

...I WISH IT HAD.



KEEP YOUR
CALM!

I SCREAMED THE WORDS, YET
I PROBABLY HAD THE MOST
DIFFICULT TIME FOLLOWING
THEM. THE UNKNOWN HAD
TAKEN ITS GRIP ON ME.



THEN... THEY
APPEARED.



THEIR BODIES RAGED
AN INFERNO. —
FLASHES OF HORROR
OVERWHELMED US...

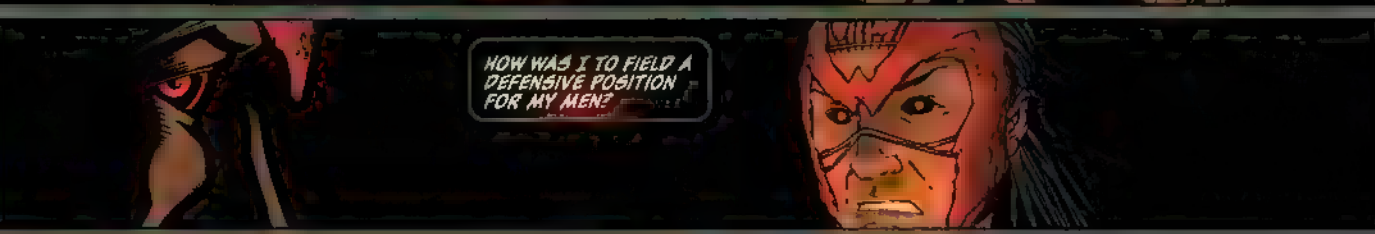
...AND BEFORE OUR FEAR
COULD TURN TO ACTION...



...THE TIDES WERE
CHURNING WITH
OUR BLOOD.



I'D NEVER
ENCOUNTERED
THIS RACE.



HOW WAS I TO FIELD A
DEFENSIVE POSITION
FOR MY MEN?

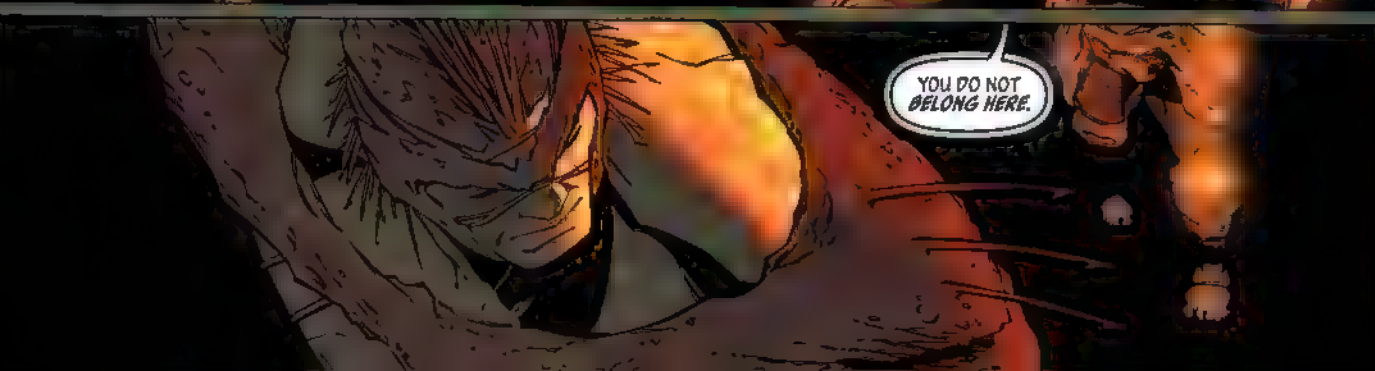


THEY HIT US HARD
AND FAST, UNLIKE
ANYTHING WE'VE
SEEN BEFORE.



THERE I DRIFTED--
ALONE, WITHOUT ARMS...

...AND SURROUNDED.



YOU DO NOT
BELONG HERE.



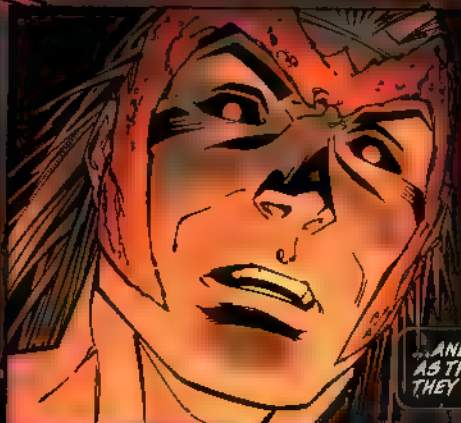
WE KNOW
WHAT YOU'VE
COME FOR...

...AND YOU
WILL NOT GET
IT BACK.

IT IS THE
PROPERTY OF
AESSYLOT AND ITS
CITIZENS-- AND IT
WILL REMAIN SO.

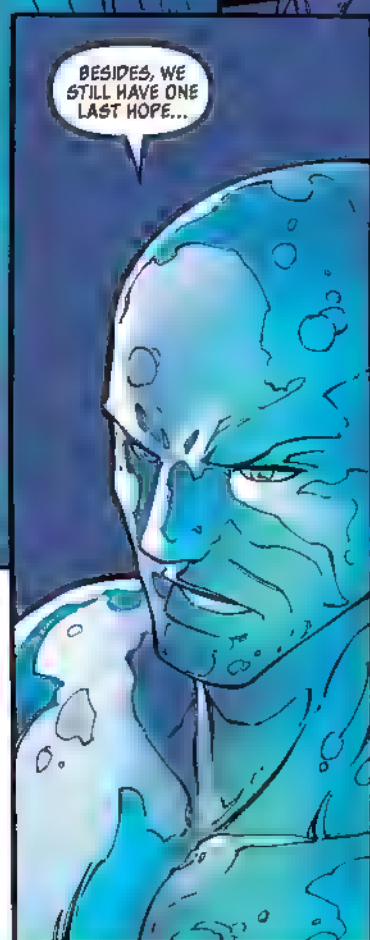
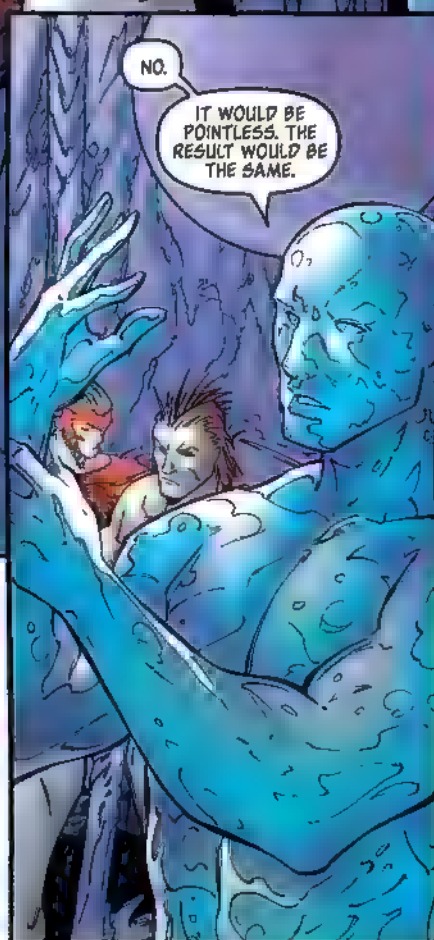
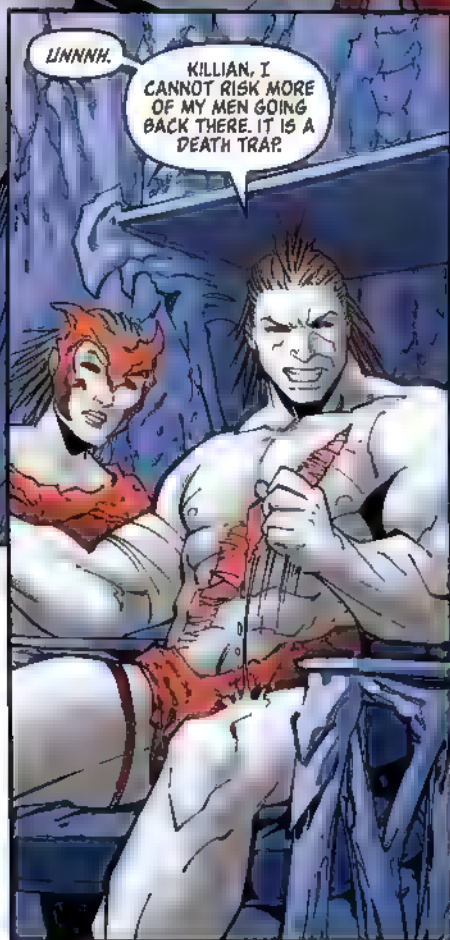
CONSIDER
YOURSELF LUCKY WE
SPARED YOU OF A
SIMILAR FATE THAN THE
REST OF YOUR CLAN.

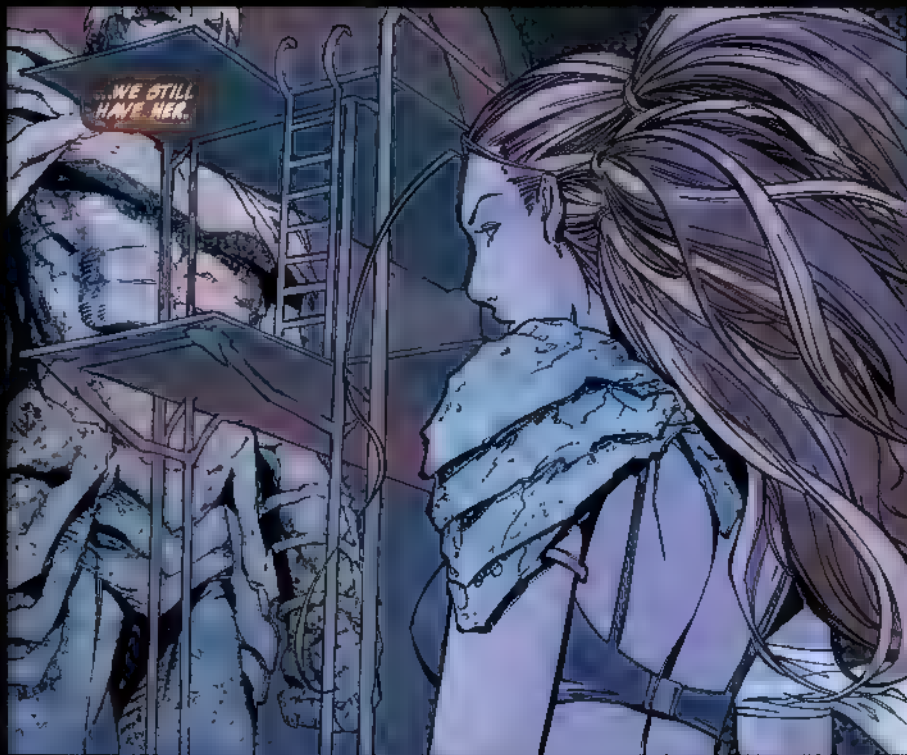
THE BLOOD OF MY SOLDIERS
HELD A TESTAMENT TO THE
SERIOUSNESS OF THEIR THREAT...



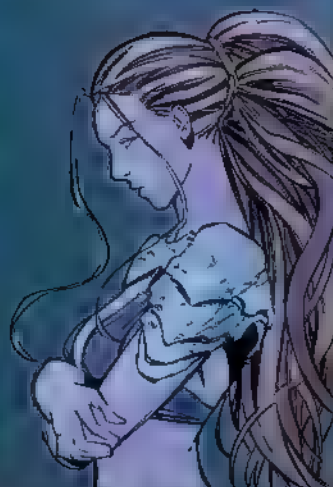
...AND AS QUICKLY
AS THEY APPEARED,
THEY SIMPLY...

...VANISHED.



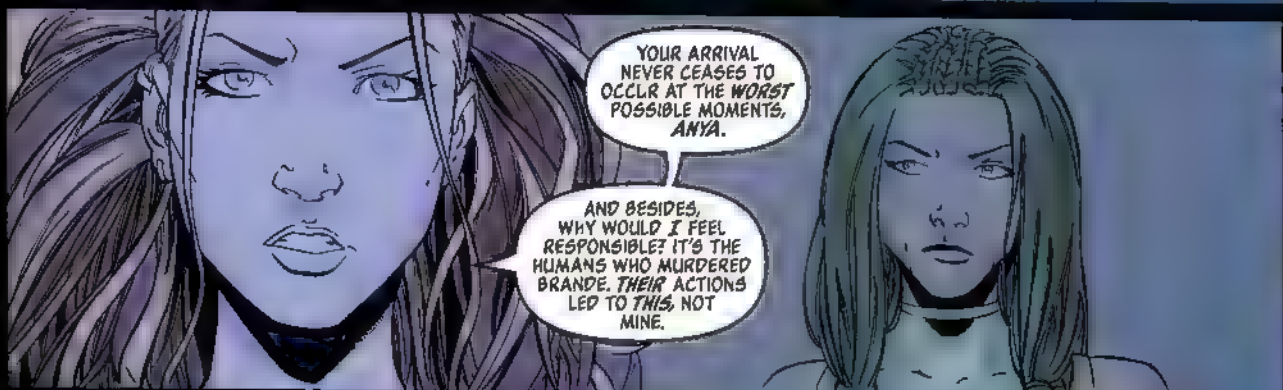


IT'S NOT
YOUR FAULT.



WHAT?

THIS. ALL OF IT.
YOU SUFFER THE
BURDEN OF THIS
TRAGEDY ACROSS
YOUR FACE WITHOUT
DISGUISE.



YOUR ARRIVAL
NEVER CEASES TO
OCCUR AT THE WORST
POSSIBLE MOMENTS,
ANYA.

AND BESIDES,
WHY WOULD I FEEL
RESPONSIBLE? IT'S THE
HUMANS WHO MURDERED
BRANDE. THEIR ACTIONS
LED TO THIS, NOT
MINE.

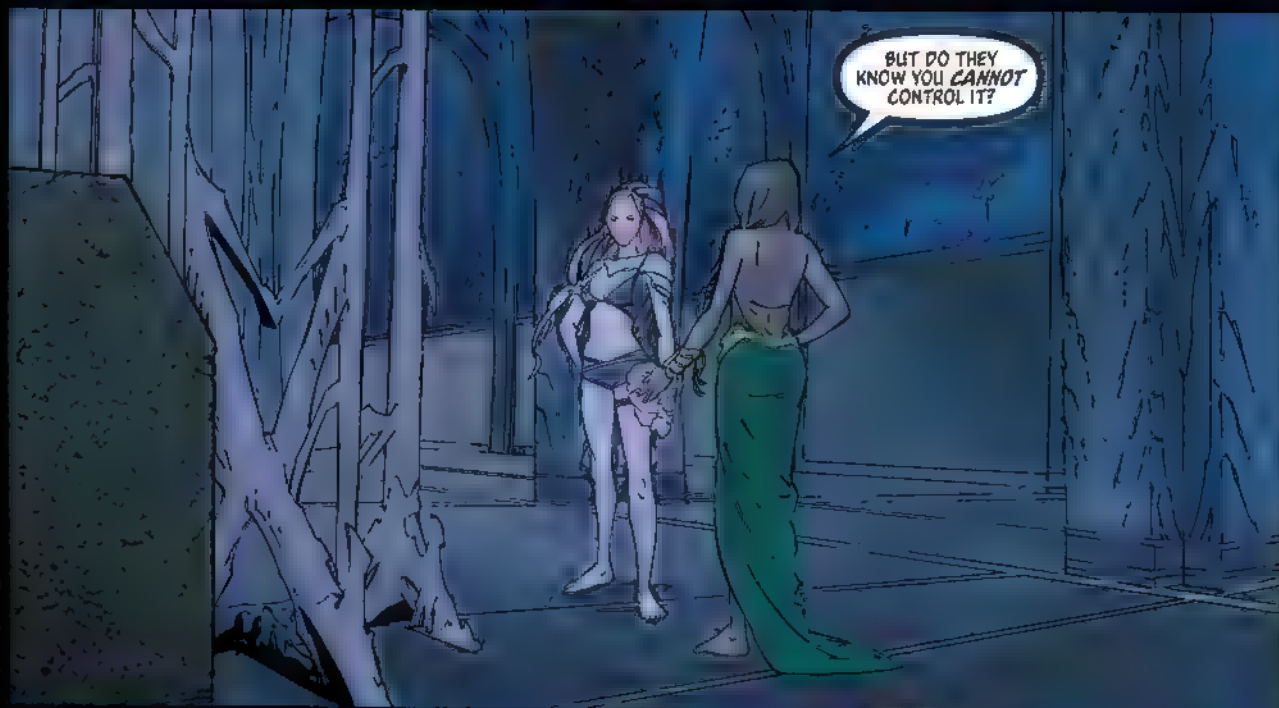


THEN WHY DO
YOU STILL CARRY
THE WEIGHT OF HIS
DEATH?

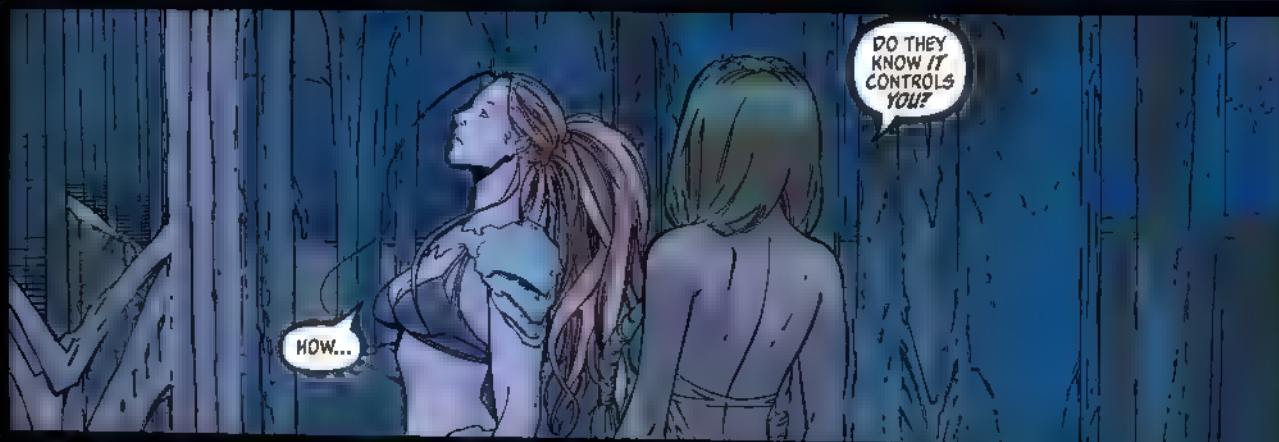
WHY DO YOU
CLUTCH THE PAIN AS
YOU DO THE SECRET
POWER BURNING DEEP
WITHIN YOU?



THEY WERE ON
DISPLAY FOR ALL TO
SEE IN BATTLE. I'D
HARDLY CALL MY
POWERS A SECRET.

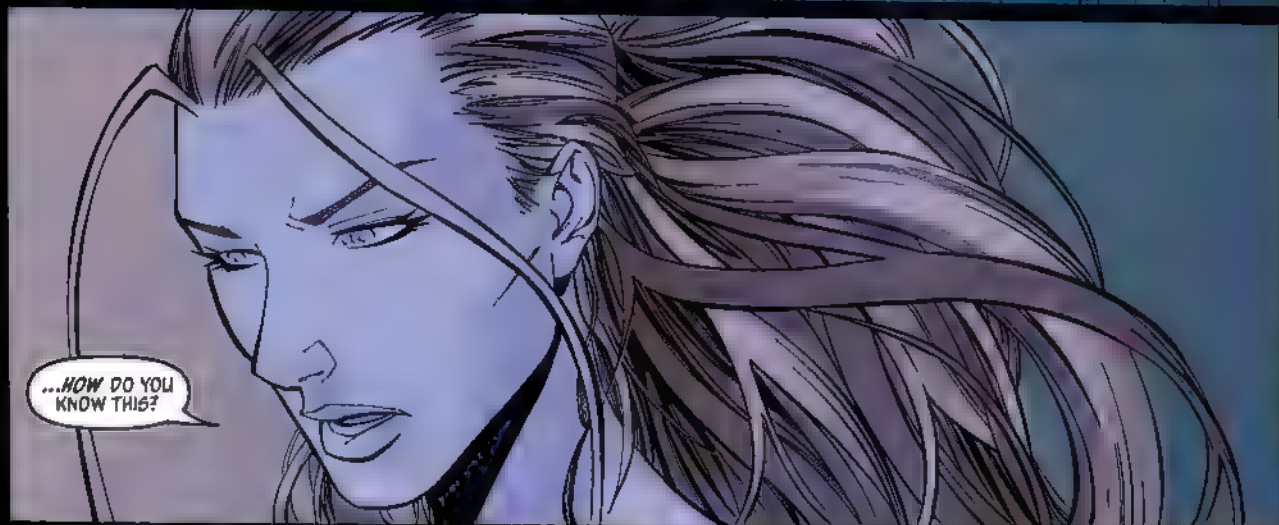


BUT DO THEY
KNOW YOU *CANNOT*
CONTROL IT?



DO THEY
KNOW *IT*
CONTROLS
YOU?

NOW...



...*NOW* DO YOU
KNOW THIS?

I KNOW MORE OF YOU THAN YOU COULD EVER IMAGINE.

I KNOW OF THE POWER OF THE ELITE THAT COURSES THROUGH YOUR VEINS. THE FRUITLESS STRUGGLE YOU ENURE TO HOLD OFF ITS ENDLESS INCREASE...

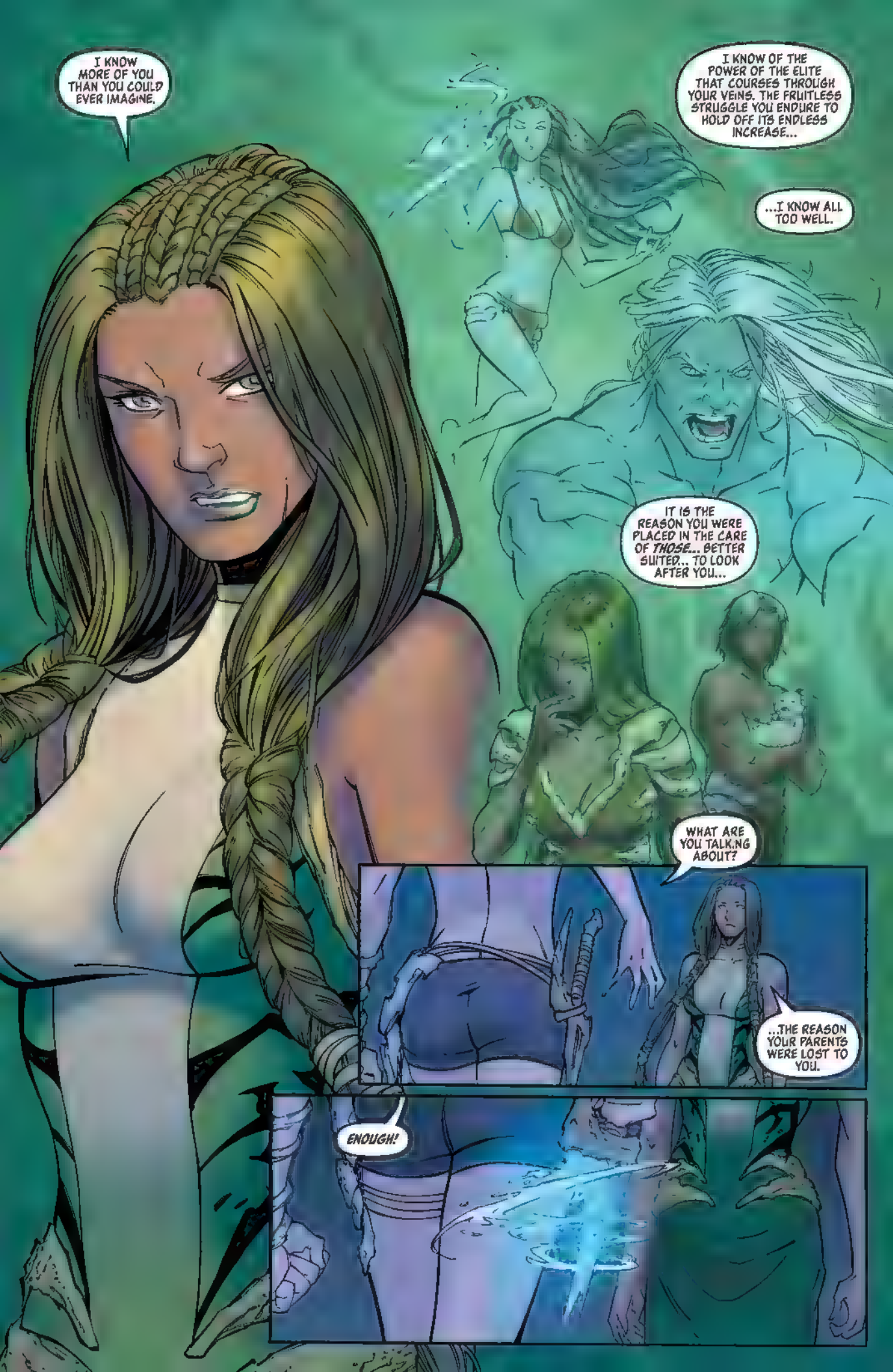
...I KNOW ALL TOO WELL.

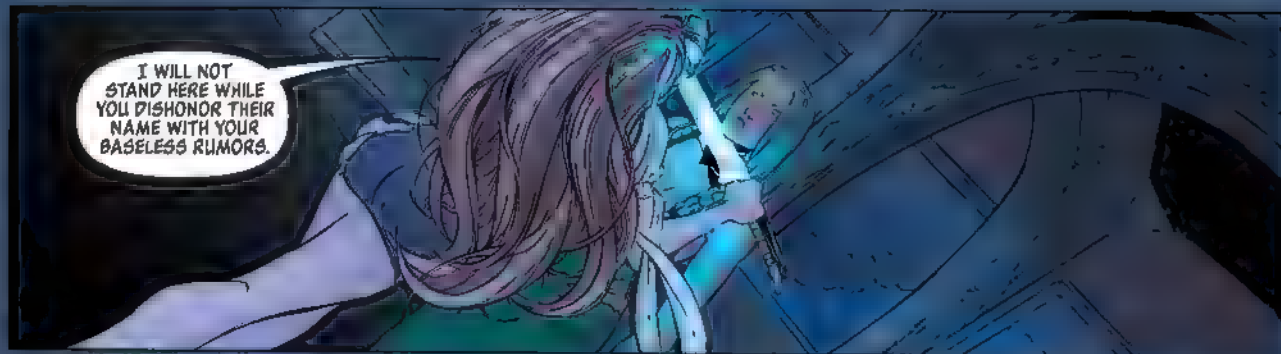
IT IS THE REASON YOU WERE PLACED IN THE CARE OF THOSE... BETTER SUITED... TO LOOK AFTER YOU...

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

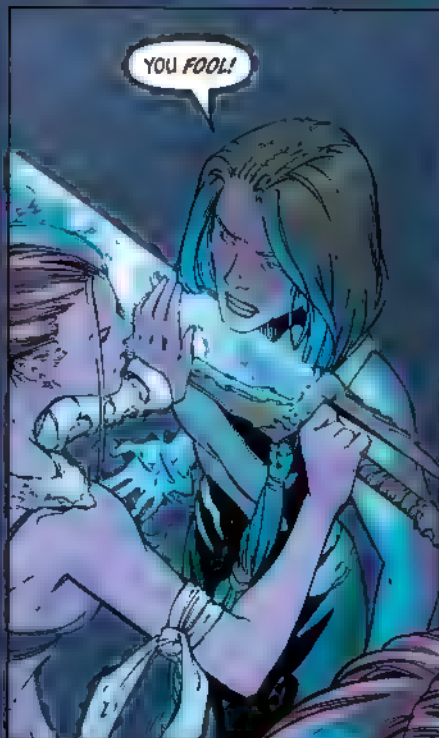
...THE REASON YOUR PARENTS WERE LOST TO YOU.

ENOUGH!

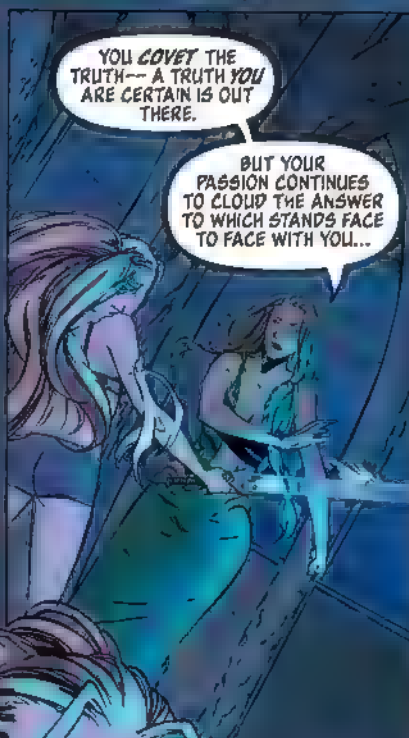




I WILL NOT
STAND HERE WHILE
YOU DISHONOR THEIR
NAME WITH YOUR
BASELESS RUMORS.

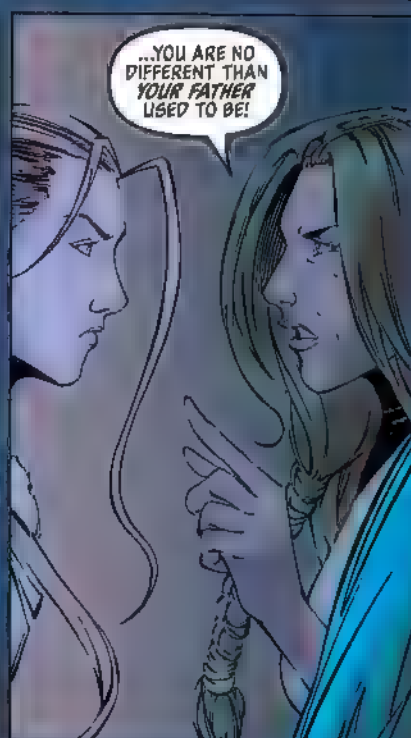


YOU FOOL!

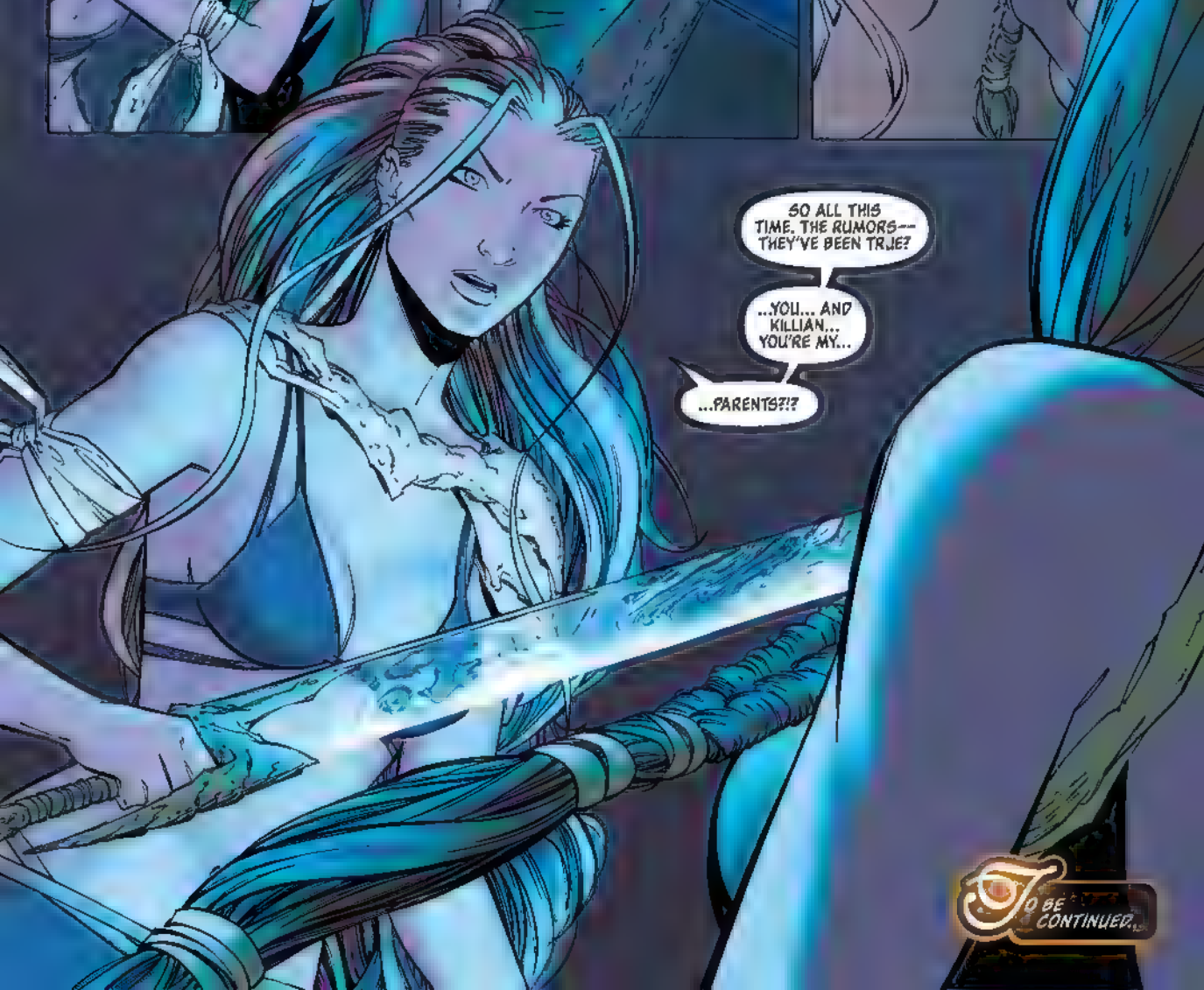


YOU *COVET* THE
TRUTH--- A TRUTH YOU
ARE CERTAIN IS OUT
THERE.

BUT YOUR
PASSION CONTINUES
TO CLOUD THE ANSWER
TO WHICH STANDS FACE
TO FACE WITH YOU...



...YOU ARE NO
DIFFERENT THAN
YOUR FATHER
USED TO BE!



SO ALL THIS
TIME, THE RUMORS---
THEY'VE BEEN TRUE?

...YOU... AND
KILLIAN...
YOU'RE MY...

...PARENTS?!!?

ASPEN
Vol. 1

#2
OF 4
COVER A

TO
DHO
Blf
E

MICHAEL TURNER'S
**FATHOM
KIVANIL**

ASPEN
Vol. 1

#2
OF 4
COVER B

10 FATHOM KIANII



VOLUME ONE Issue Two of Four

VINCE HERNANDEZ

Story

MARCS TO

DOX HO

Art

PETER STEIGERWALD, JOHN STARR, BETH SOTELO, & DAVID MORÁN

Colors

JOSH REED & MARK ROSLAN

Lettering



Fathom Created by MICHAEL TURNER

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MICHAEL TURNER'S FATHOM: KIANI™ Vol. 1 Issue 2

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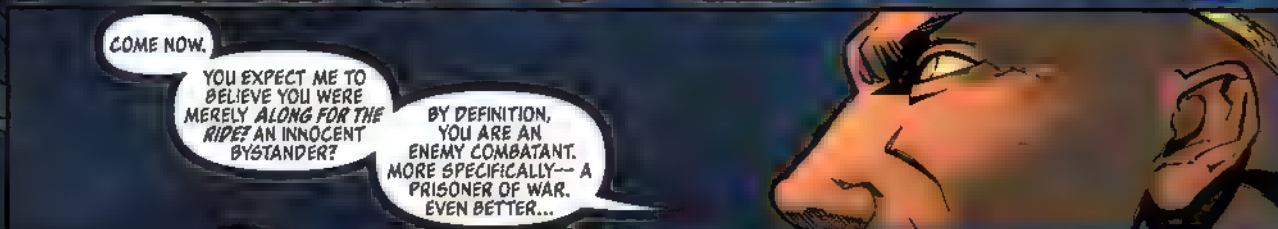
FOR THE COMICS RETAILER NEAREST YOU CALL 1 800-COMICBOOK



PLEASE!

PLEASE!!!

THEY TELL
ME NOTHING!
I DON'T KNOW
ANYTHING!!!



COME NOW.

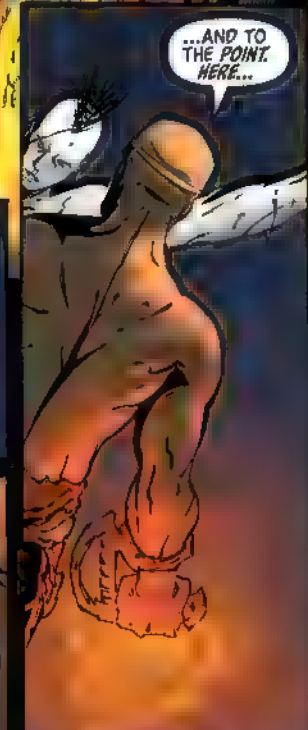
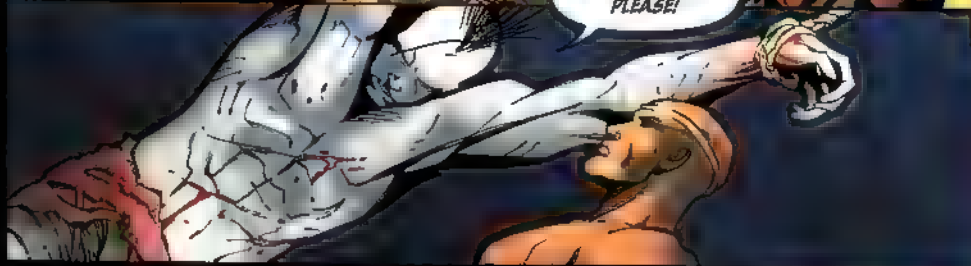
YOU EXPECT ME TO
BELIEVE YOU WERE
MERELY ALONG FOR THE
RIDE? AN INNOCENT
BYSTANDER?

BY DEFINITION,
YOU ARE AN
ENEMY COMBATANT.
MORE SPECIFICALLY-- A
PRISONER OF WAR.
EVEN BETTER...

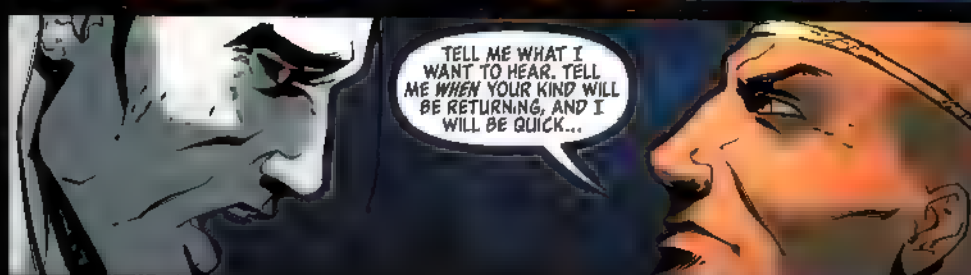


...MY
PRISONER
OF WAR.

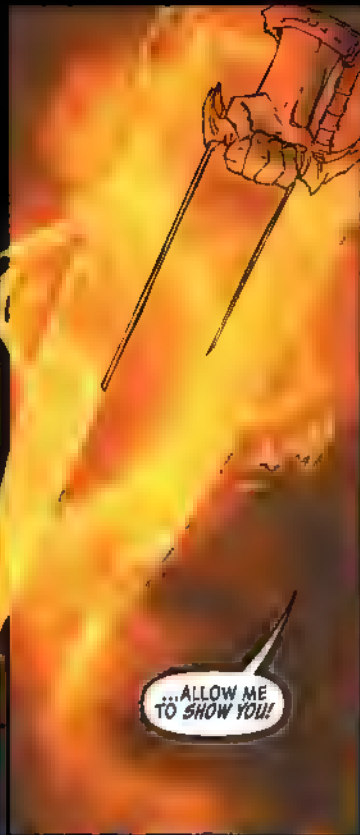
NO!!! YOU'RE
MAKING A MISTAKE!
PLEASE!



...AND TO THE POINT.
HERE...



TELL ME WHAT I
WANT TO HEAR. TELL
ME WHEN YOUR KIND
WILL BE RETURNING, AND I
WILL BE QUICK...



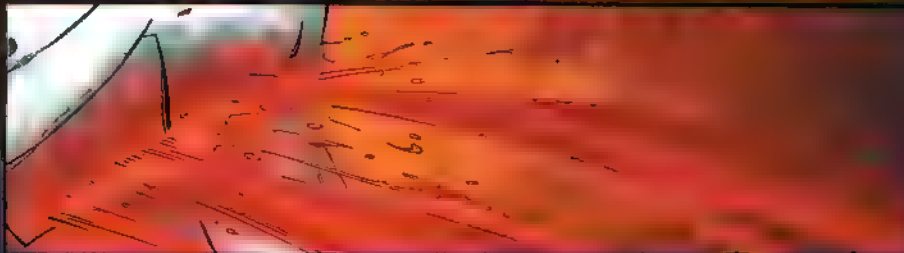
...ALLOW ME
TO SHOW YOU!



NOOOO!



AAAAAEEEEE!!!



YOU
SHOULD CONSIDER
YOURSELF LUCKY.

THE BLADE OF KIRA
IS A SACRED WEAPON,
ONLY RECENTLY RETURNING
TO LEAD OUR PEOPLE
TO SALVATION.

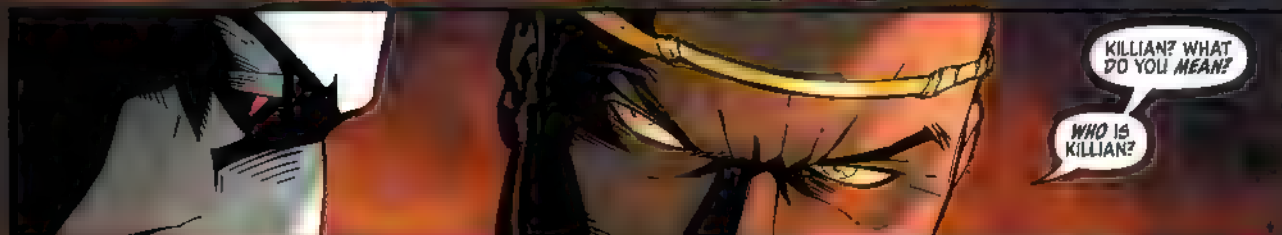
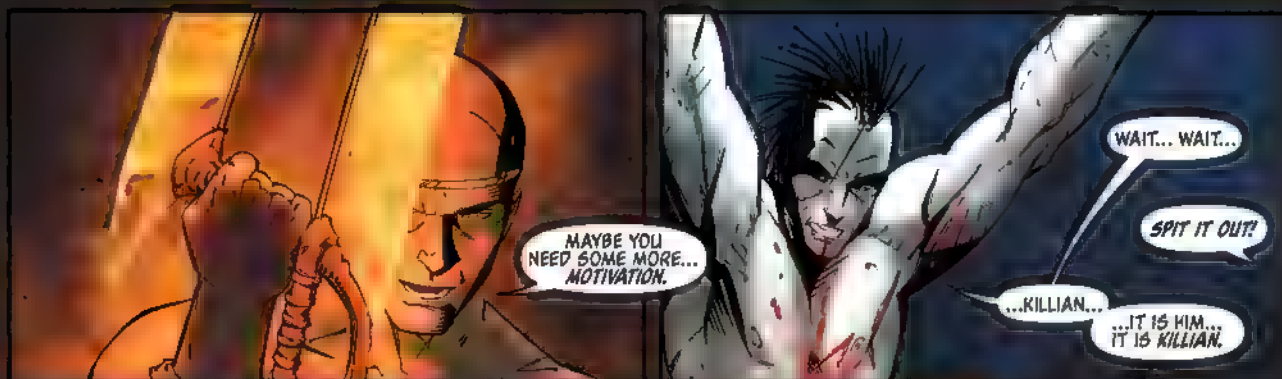
IN ESSENCE,
YOUR... SEARED FLESH, IS THE
FIRST STEP ON THE PATH TO THIS
SALVATION. YOUR CRIES OF PAIN--
YOUR BLOOD, WILL FOREVER
MARK THE OCCASION.

SO REALLY,
YOU SHOULD BE
THANKING ME.



URGH.

COME AGAIN? I
CAN'T MAKE OUT
YOUR WORDS.



WAAAH!!!

THEN...

THERE, THERE. IT'S ALRIGHT MY LOVE.

I CAN'T DO IT!
I WON'T! YOU CAN'T
ASK ME TO!

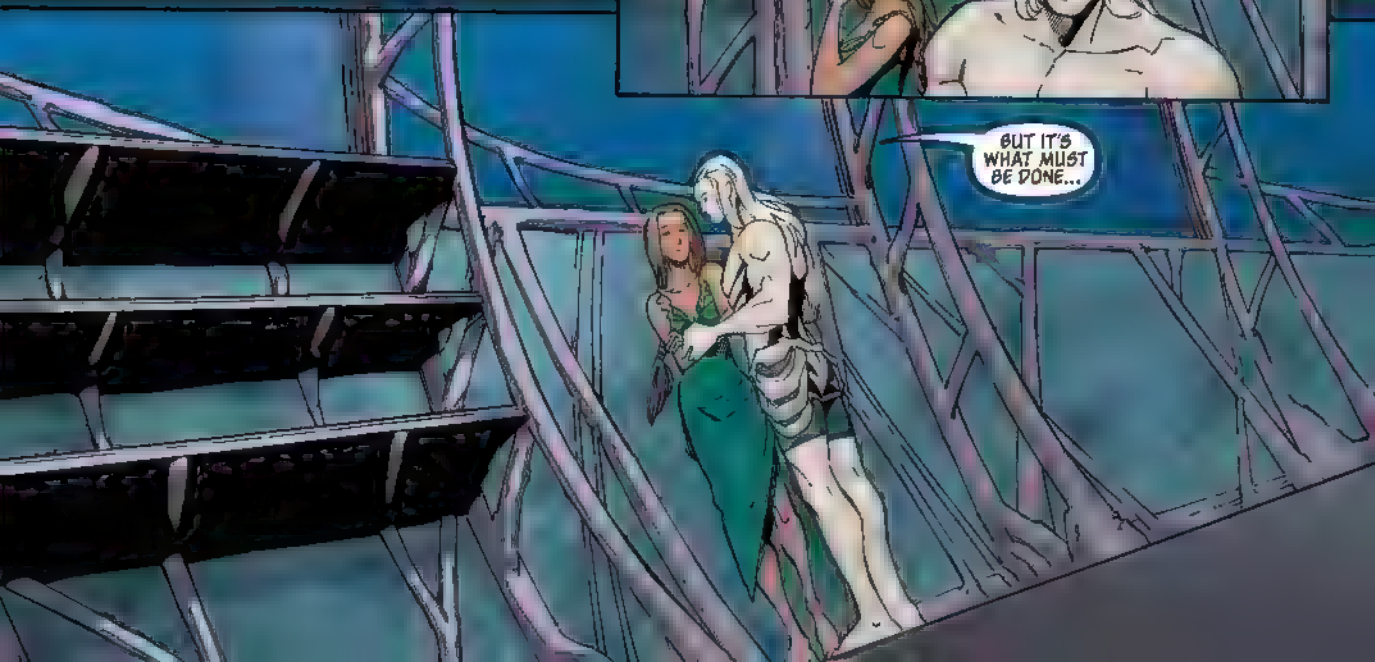
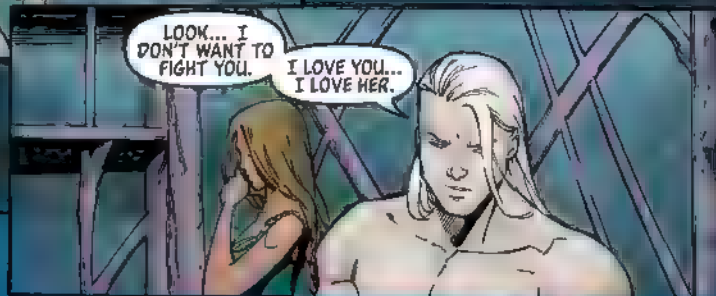
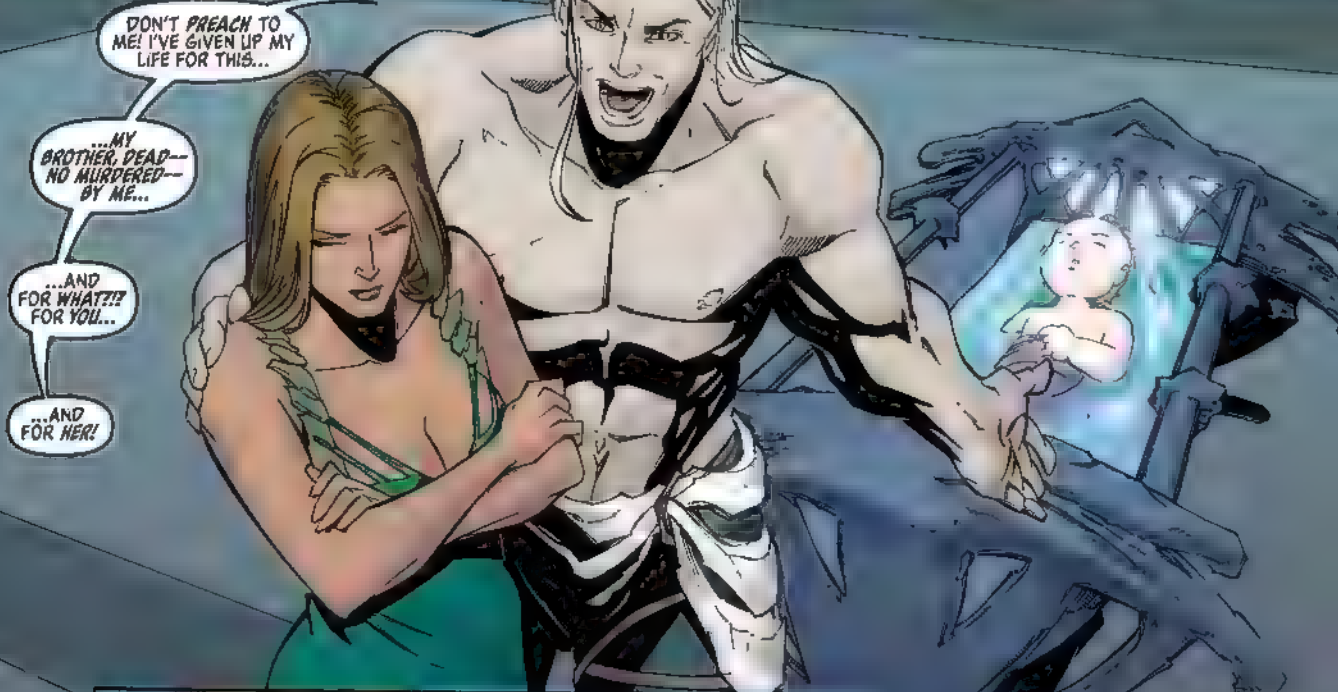
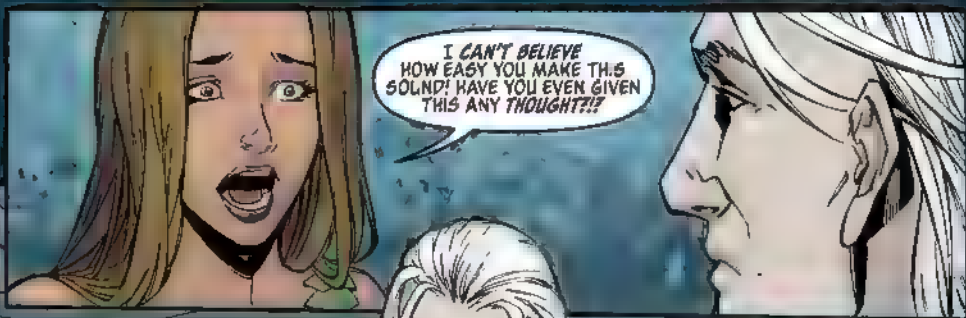
WE DON'T HAVE
A CHOICE, ANYA.

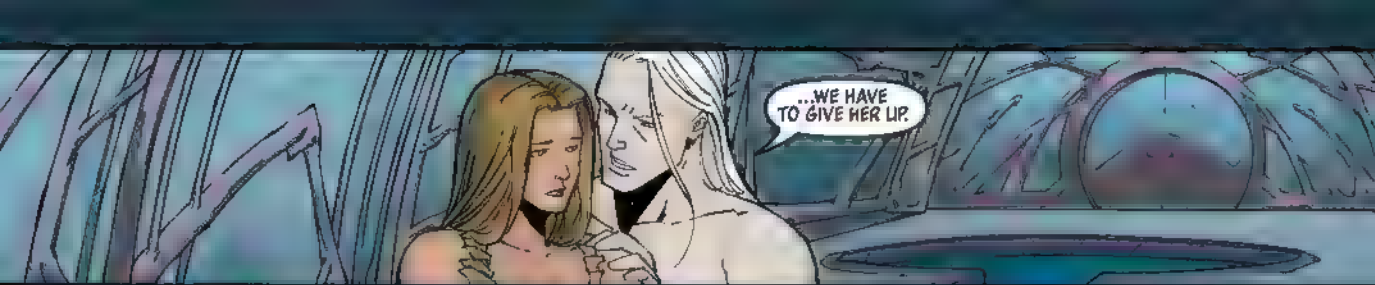
WE'RE FUGITIVES. WHAT
KIND OF LIFE WOULD THAT BE FOR
HER? I CANNOT ALLOW HER TO BE
RAISED IN THE MIDST OF WHAT
WE'RE PLANNING...

WAAAH!!!

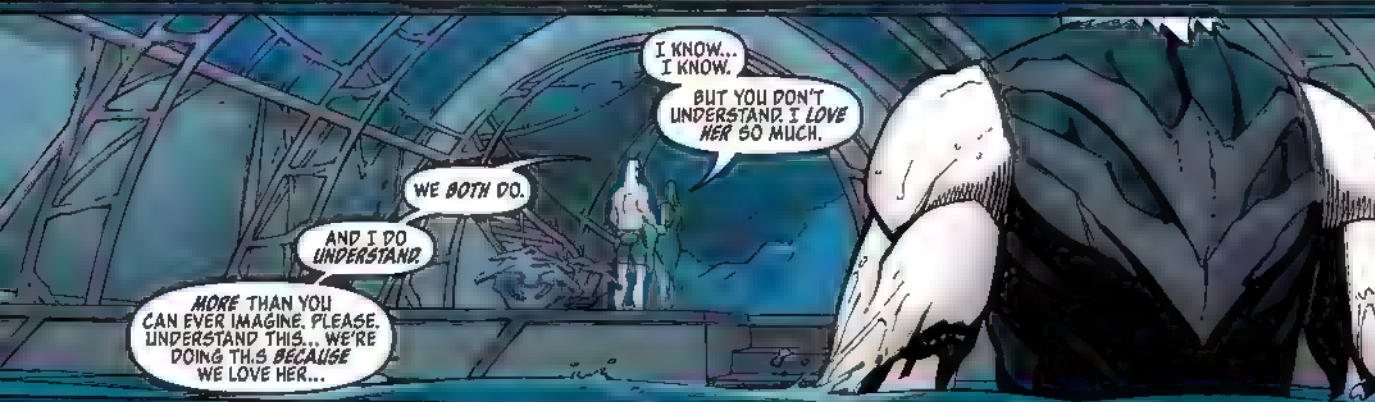
WAAAH!!

...I WILL
NOT ALLOW
MY ONLY DAUGHTER TO
SUFFER THE SAME
FATE AS US.





...WE HAVE
TO GIVE HER UP.



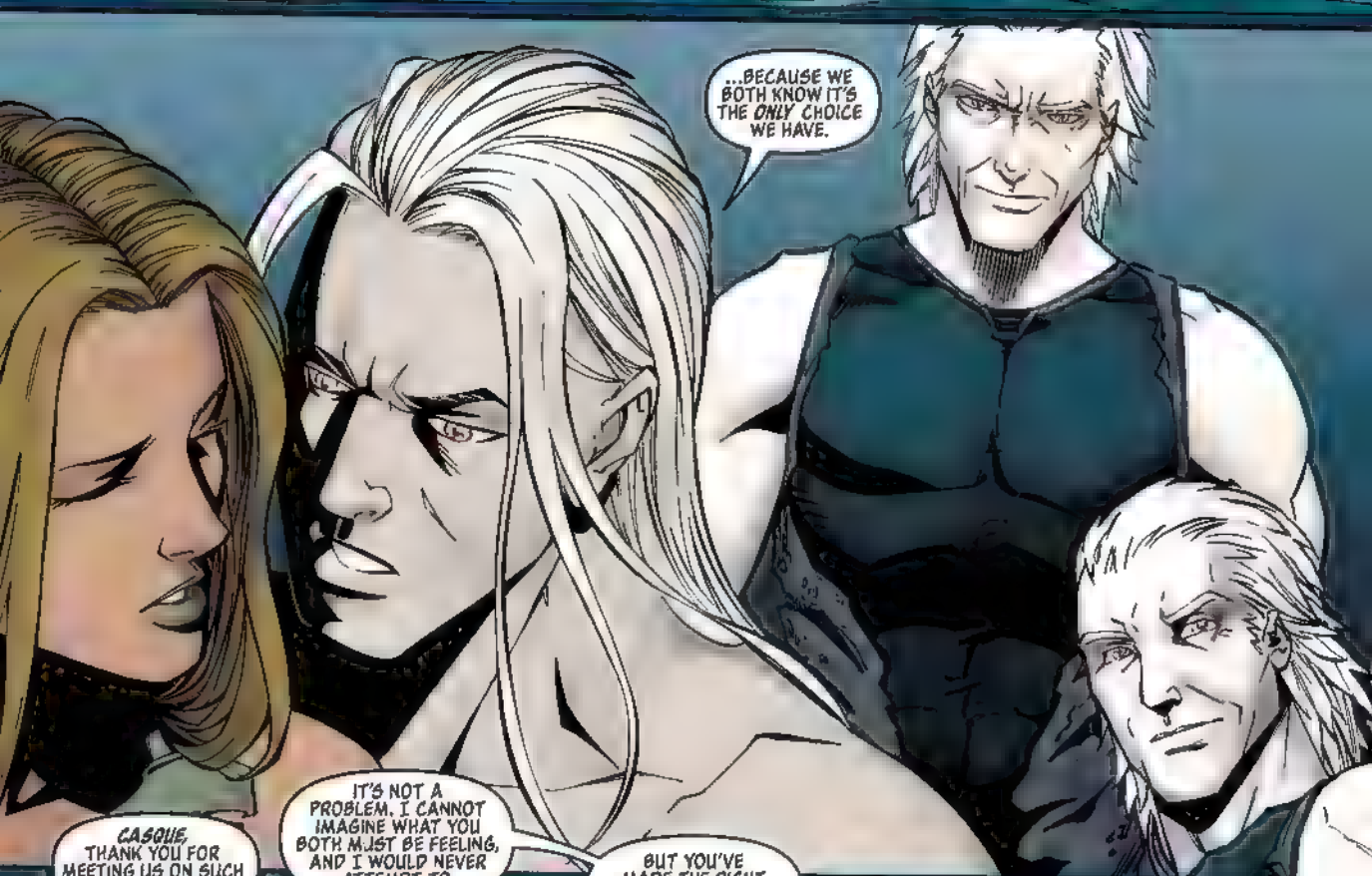
I KNOW...
I KNOW.

BUT YOU DON'T
UNDERSTAND. I LOVE
HER SO MUCH.

WE BOTH DO.

AND I DO
UNDERSTAND

MORE THAN YOU
CAN EVER IMAGINE. PLEASE.
UNDERSTAND THIS... WE'RE
DOING THIS BECAUSE
WE LOVE HER...



...BECAUSE WE
BOTH KNOW IT'S
THE ONLY CHOICE
WE HAVE.



CASQUE,
THANK YOU FOR
MEETING US ON SUCH
SHORT NOTICE.

IT'S NOT A
PROBLEM. I CANNOT
IMAGINE WHAT YOU
BOTH MUST BE FEELING,
AND I WOULD NEVER
ATTEMPT TO.

BUT YOU'VE
MADE THE RIGHT
CHOICE. KIANI WILL BE
BETTER FOR IT. HER
FUTURE-- BETTER.

I TRUST
YOU'LL INSTILL IN
OUR DAUGHTER THE SAME
VALUES WE'VE SACRIFICED
SO MUCH TO PROTECT.

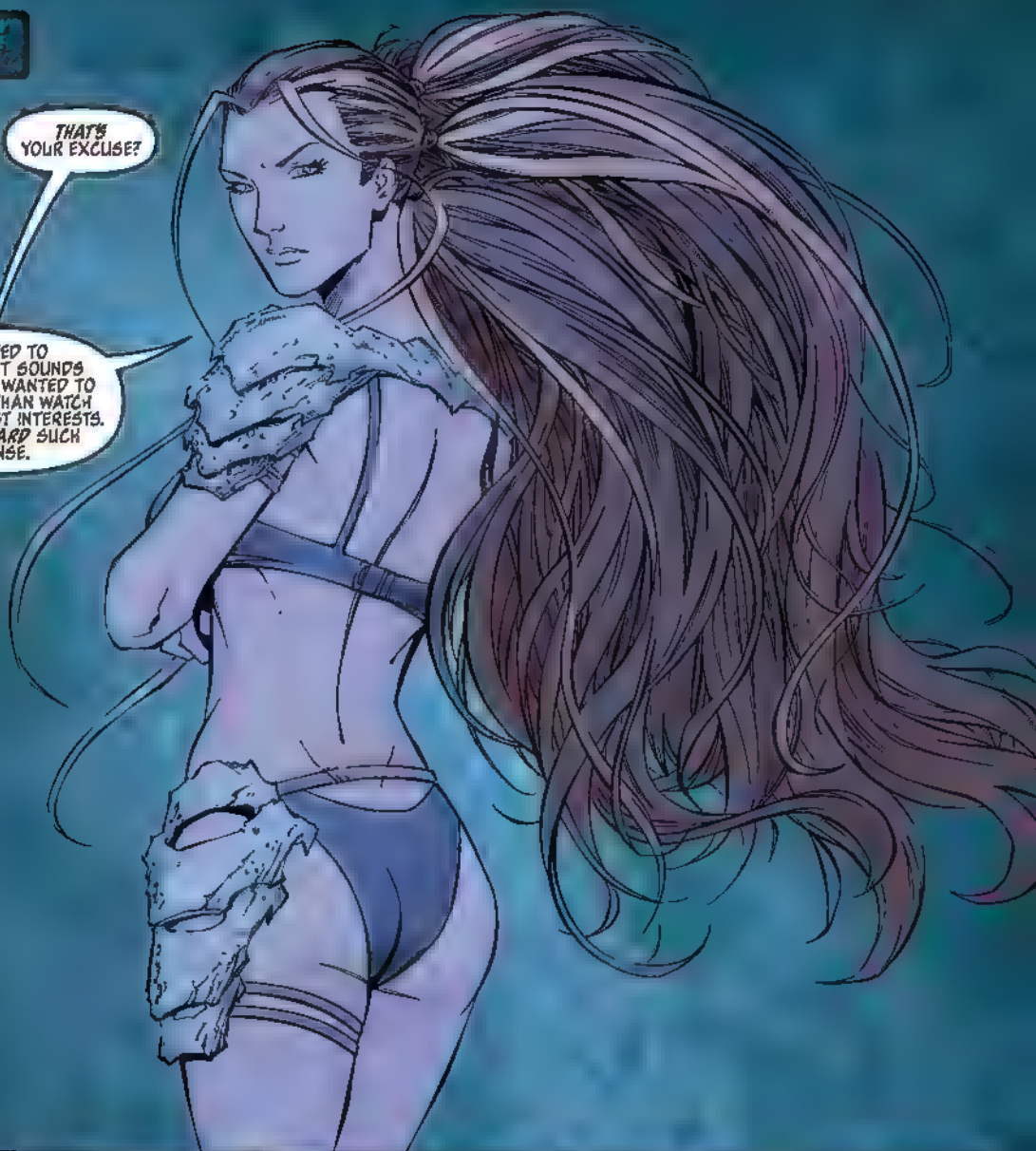
SHE WILL RECEIVE
THE VERY BEST CHILDHOOD
ONE COULD HOPE FOR. KIANI WILL
GROW WITH A CARING HAND--
BUT ALSO ONE WITH DISCIPLINE.
REST ASSURED, SHE WILL
UNDERSTAND THE REALITIES
OF THIS WORLD...

MEANING... NOW THE...

THAT'S
YOUR EXCUSE?

NOW.

YOU WANTED TO
PROTECT ME? IT SOUNDS
MORE LIKE YOU WANTED TO
ABANDON ME THAN WATCH
OUT FOR MY BEST INTERESTS.
I'VE NEVER HEARD SUCH
NONSENSE.



I UNDERSTAND
YOUR ANGER.

THAT DOESN'T
MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO
ME. HOW DID YOU THINK I'D
REACT? DID YOU EXPECT ME
TO WELCOME YOU WITH
OPEN ARMS?

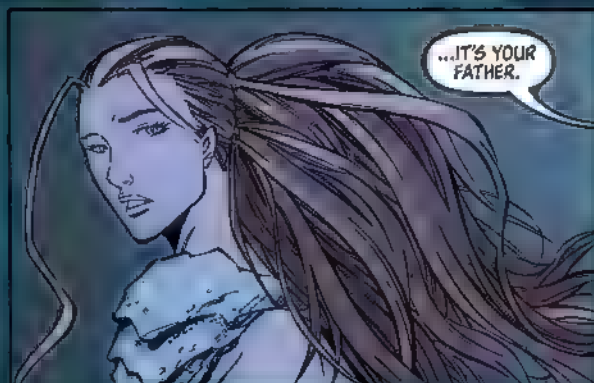
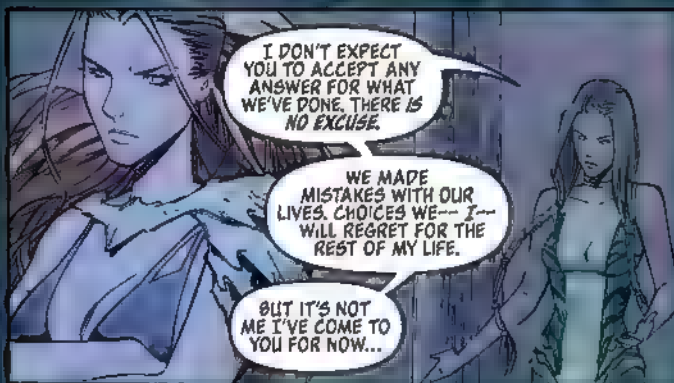
KIANI, PLEASE TRY TO
UNDERSTAND. I LOVE YOU. I'VE
ALWAYS LOVED YOU. IF YOU ONLY
KNEW THE AGONY I'VE ENDURED
TRYING TO HIDE THIS SECRET. BUT IT
MEANT YOU LIVING YOUR LIFE FREE
OF THE BOUNDS OF YOUR
FATHER AND I.

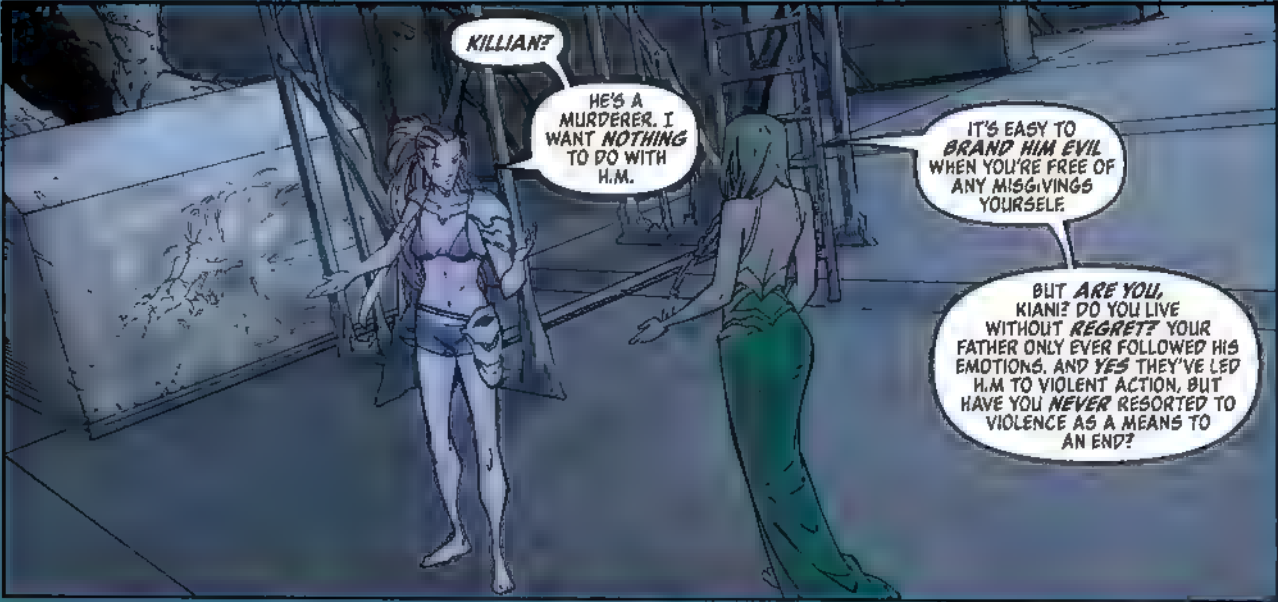
I DON'T EXPECT
YOU TO ACCEPT ANY
ANSWER FOR WHAT
WE'VE DONE. THERE IS
NO EXCUSE.

WE MADE
MISTAKES WITH OUR
LIVES. CHOICES WE-- I--
WILL REGRET FOR THE
REST OF MY LIFE.

BUT IT'S NOT
ME I'VE COME TO
YOU FOR NOW...

...IT'S YOUR
FATHER.



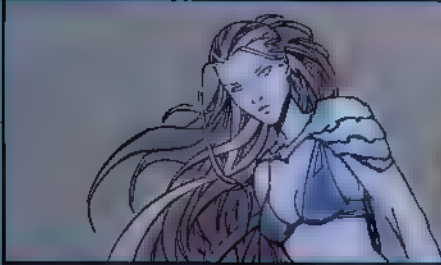


KILLIAN?

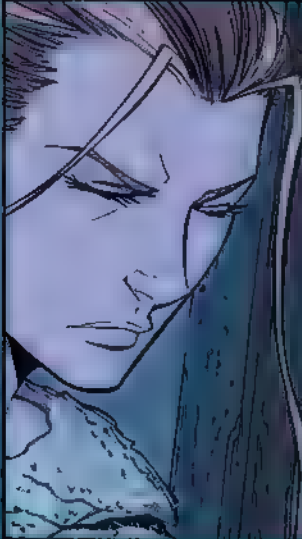
HE'S A
MURDERER. I
WANT **NOTHING**
TO DO WITH
H.M.

IT'S EASY TO
BRAND HIM EVIL
WHEN YOU'RE FREE OF
ANY MISGIVINGS
YOURSELF.

BUT **ARE YOU,**
KIANI? DO YOU LIVE
WITHOUT **REGRET?** YOUR
FATHER ONLY EVER FOLLOWED HIS
EMOTIONS, AND **YES** THEY'VE LED
H.M. TO VIOLENT ACTION, BUT
HAVE YOU **NEVER** RESORTED TO
VIOLENCE AS A MEANS TO
AN END?



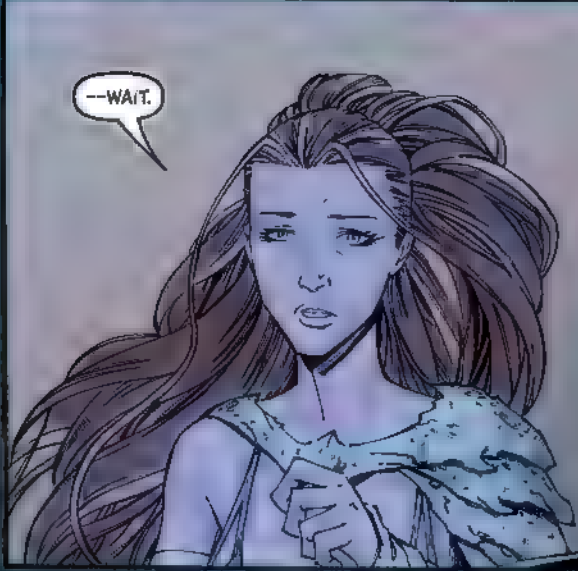
CAN YOU ALSO
SAY YOU'VE NEVER
LET YOUR EMOTIONS
CONTROL YOUR
ACTIONS?



ALRIGHT. I CAN
SEE I'VE NOT SWAYED
YOUR JLDGMENT. FOR
WHAT IT'S WORTH...



...I MOURN
FOR YOUR
FALLEN FRIEND.



--WAIT.

AS SHE WENT ON ABOUT KILLIAN—MY FATHER'S CATASTROPHIC SITUATION, I REMEMBERED THE WORDS CASQUET HAD TOLD ME.

THE TRUTH LIES BELOW THE SURFACE OF ALL THINGS.

KILLIAN ATTEMPTED TO RECRUIT ASPEN MATTHEWS IN HIS QUEST TO EXACT REVENGE ON THE HUMANS ABOVE THE SURFACE.

HIS EFFORTS FAILED MISERABLY.

IN THE END, KILLIAN FELL VICTIM TO HIS OWN EMOTIONS. HE PUT HIS TRUST IN A COMPLETE STRANGER, A STRANGER WHO DISCOVERED THE TRUTH BENEATH THE SURFACE. THE TRUTH ABOUT ALL OF US...

WE ARE AFRAID.

AFRAID OF THE HUMANS. AFRAID OF EACH OTHER. WE FEAR WHAT WE DON'T UNDERSTAND. KILLIAN'S OWN FEARS MATERIALIZED WHEN ASPEN BETRAYED HIM IN HIS EYES, BY HURLING HIM INTO A BEAM OF PURE ENERGY—HIS BODY WAS DISPERSED ACROSS THE PLANET. UNBELIEVABLY, HE'S MANAGED TO RETRIEVE ALMOST ALL OF HIMSELF. ALMOST ALL.

THIS IS WHERE I COME IN.

KIANI, WE WOULDN'T COME TO YOU IF YOU WEREN'T OUR LAST HOPE. WITH YOUR MANIFESTED POWERS, YOU ARE THE ONLY PERSON CAPABLE OF PENETRATING THEIR DEFENSES.

YOU ARE THE ONLY ONE POWERFUL ENOUGH.

I'M SORRY.

I WON'T BE INVOLVED WITH ANY MORE SUFFERING.

I CAN'T... IT'S JUST... IT'S TOO MUCH.

I'VE STEPPED UP
PATROLS OF THE
OUTER LIMITS OF THE
CITY-- FOR EXTRA
PRECAUTION.

THEY WON'T
STOP COMING
YOU KNOW.

YES.

THE SUBSTANCE IS
FAR TOO VALUABLE--
NO MATTER WHAT USE
THEY MAY HAVE
FOR IT.

IF THEY HOLD IT
IN SUCH HIGH REGARD
WHY NOT GIVE THE
SUBSTANCE BACK TO
THEM, YOKEN?

I MEANT
IT'S FAR TOO
VALUABLE
FOR US!

DON'T YOU
GET IT? THIS IS
NOT SOME RANDOM
OCCURRENCE PLAYING
ITSELF OUT IN FRONT
OF OUR EYES.

SO YOU
DO BELIEVE IT IS THE
BLOOD OF KIRA? THAT
HER WORDS ARE COMING
TO FRUITION?

HOW CAN YOU NOT?
THIS MATERIAL--WHATEVER
IT MAY BE-- CAN FINALLY
SET US FREE.

NO LONGER
WILL WE BE DEPENDENT
ON NATURE'S WHIM, THIS
SUBSTANCE CAN FREE
US FROM THAT...

...IT WILL BE
OUR LIFEBLOOD.

IT HAS GIVEN
US AN ALTERNATIVE.
IT WILL GIVE THE
PEOPLE HOPE...

...AND IT'S BEEN
FAR TOO LONG SINCE
THEY'VE HAD ANY,
MY BROTHER.

HEY.

I KNEW I'D
FIND YOU HERE.

YOUR SPECIALTY
IS INTELLIGENCE.
YOU WANT A RING OF
VALOR FOR FINDING
ME?

NO, THAT'S
FINE, BUT I WOULD
LIKE THE OLD
KIANI BACK.

I SEE
SUBTLETY IS
ANOTHER ONE OF
YOUR SPECIALTIES

WHY ARE YOU
DUMPING ON ME? I
DIDN'T KILL BRANDE.
AND NEITHER DID
YOU!

YOU HAVE TO
GET PAST ALL
OF THIS.

HOW CAN YOU
FORGET HIM SO
EASILY? HE WAS OUR
BEST FRIEND!

FORGET??

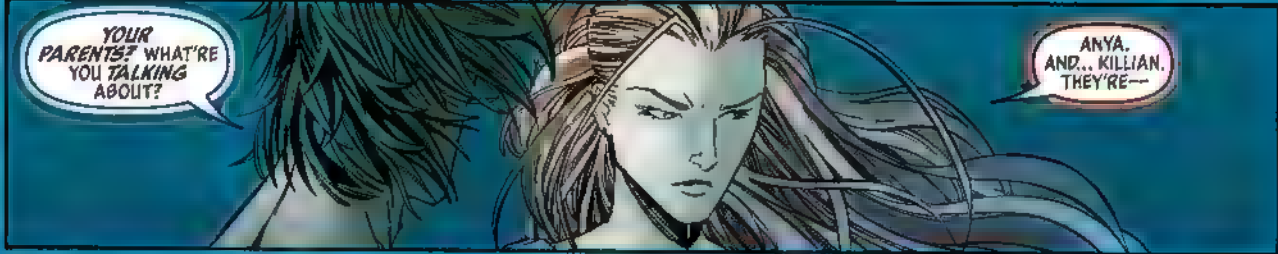
I WAS HERE
KIANI! DON'T
TELL ME I'VE
FORGOTTEN.

EVERY FREE MOMENT,
I SEE HIS FACE-- MY BEST FRIEND.
BUT I HAVE TO GET ON WITH MY LIFE.
BRANDE WOULD'VE BEEN THE FIRST
PERSON TO TELL US THIS.

I'M SORRY IF
I CAN'T JUST GET ON
AFTER EVERYTHING
THAT'S HAPPENED...

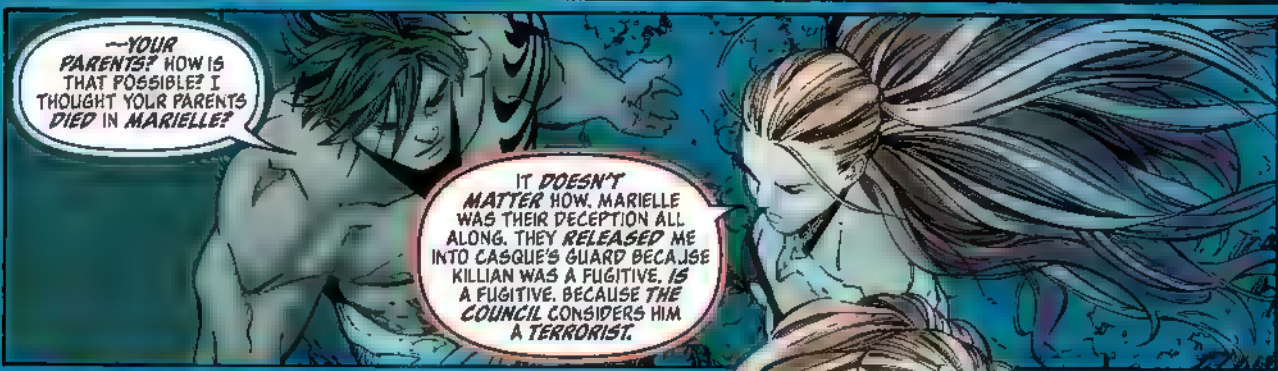
...AND AFTER
EVERYTHING I'VE
LEARNED...

...ABOUT MY
PARENTS.



YOUR PARENTS? WHAT'RE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

ANYA. AND... KILLIAN. THEY'RE--



--YOUR PARENTS? HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE? I THOUGHT YOUR PARENTS DIED IN MARIELLE?

IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW. MARIELLE WAS THEIR DECEPTION ALL ALONG. THEY RELEASED ME INTO CASQUE'S GUARD BECAUSE KILLIAN WAS A FUGITIVE. IS A FUGITIVE. BECAUSE THE COUNCIL CONSIDERS HIM A TERRORIST.

YOU'RE BLAMING US FOR YOUR FATHER ABANDONING YOU? KILLIAN WAS A MURDERER LONG BEFORE HE GAVE YOU UP. HE KILLED HIS OWN BROTHER!

YOU'RE RIGHT.

I'M NOT BLAMING ANYONE.



AND YOU'RE ALSO RIGHT, I CAN'T KEEP DOING THIS. I NEED TO MOVE ON.

SO, WHAT-- YOU'RE LEAVING? WHAT ABOUT THE SECURITY FORCE...



...AND
WHAT CASQUE
TAUGHT US?



CASQUE?
WHERE IS HE NOW?
WHERE WAS HE
DURING THE ATTACK?
DURING BRAND'S
DEATH?



I DON'T WANT
TO ARGUE. UNDERSTAND
I'VE ALWAYS LOVED YOU.
YOU'RE LIKE MY BROTHER.
BUT I HAVE TO LEAVE THIS
PLACE. I HAVE TO DO
THIS FOR ME...



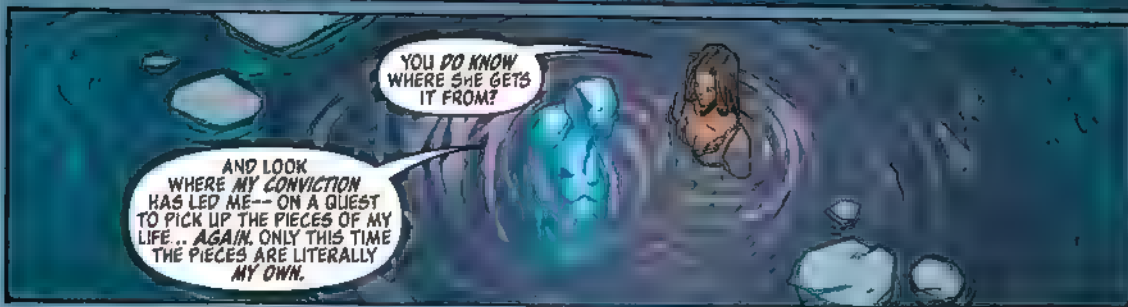
...I'M
SORRY.



I FAILED YOU.

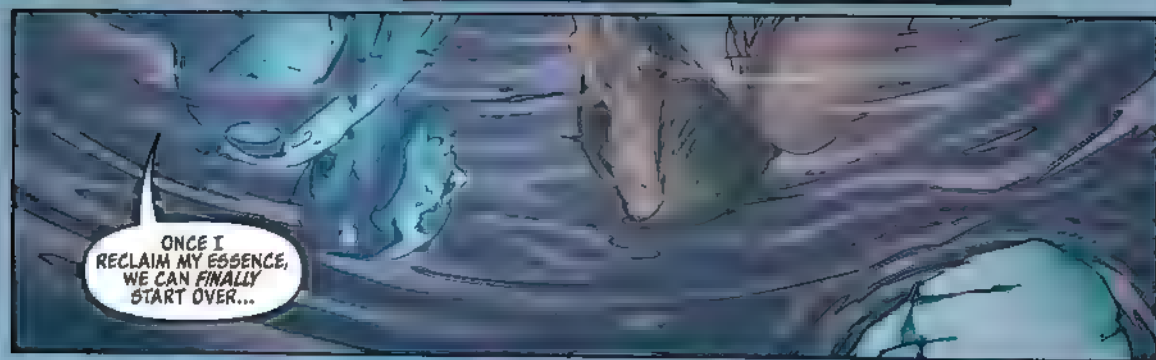
PLEASE.

YOUR CHANCES OF CONVINCING HER WERE SLIM AT BEST. SHE IS AN INTELLIGENT, FREE-MINDED WARRIOR. PART OF ME APPLAUDS HER CONVICTION.



YOU DO KNOW WHERE SHE GETS IT FROM?

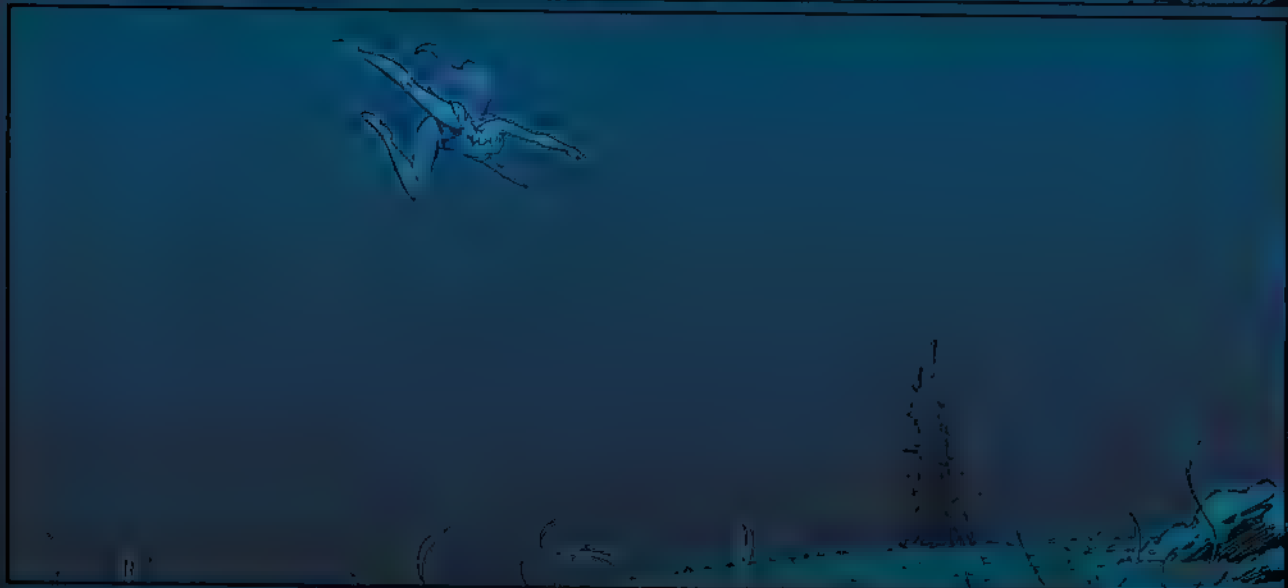
AND LOOK WHERE MY CONVICTION HAS LED ME-- ON A QUEST TO PICK UP THE PIECES OF MY LIFE.. AGAIN. ONLY THIS TIME THE PIECES ARE LITERALLY MY OWN.

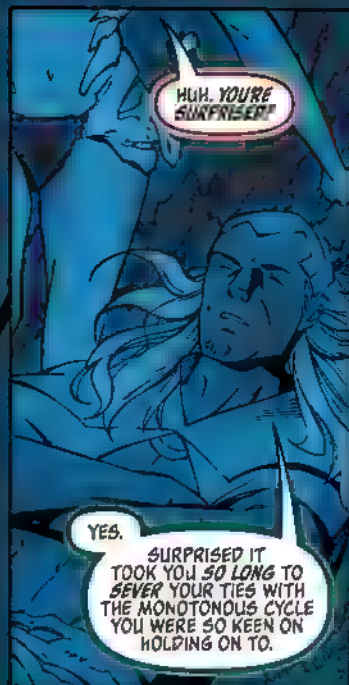


ONCE I RECLAIM MY ESSENCE, WE CAN FINALLY START OVER...



...WE CAN FINALLY BE A FAMILY AGAIN.





HUH. YOU'RE SURPRISED?

YES.

SURPRISED IT TOOK YOU SO LONG TO SEVER YOUR TIES WITH THE MONOTONOUS CYCLE YOU WERE SO KEEN ON HOLDING ON TO.



IT SEEMS YOU'RE FINALLY READY TO BEGIN LIVING YOUR DAYS INSTEAD OF CONFORMING TO THE STATUS QUO, EH?

ALWAYS WITH THE ELOQUENCE, MASACAS.

LIKE EVERYONE ELSE IN MY LIFE, YOU'RE MISTAKING MY TRUE INTENTIONS. I JUST WANT TO FIND MY FATHER. I NEED TO KNOW THE TRUTH.



KILLIAN?



SO YOU KNEW AND DIDN'T TELL ME?

IT'S NOT MY BUSINESS TO DIVULGE IN FAMILY MATTERS-- ESPECIALLY A FAMILY AS... VOLATILE... AS YOURS.

BUT WHY WASTE TIME WITH SEMANTICS. YOU WANT TO FIND THE PATH TO THE CITY OF AESCYLOT, NO? IT'S WHERE YOUR FATHER'S... REMAINS... REMAIN?



WHY DO YOU ASK QUESTIONS YOU ALREADY KNOW THE ANSWER TO?



WHY WOULD I QUESTION MYSELF IF I ALREADY KNOW THE ANSWER?



WHAT IS
THIS PLACE?

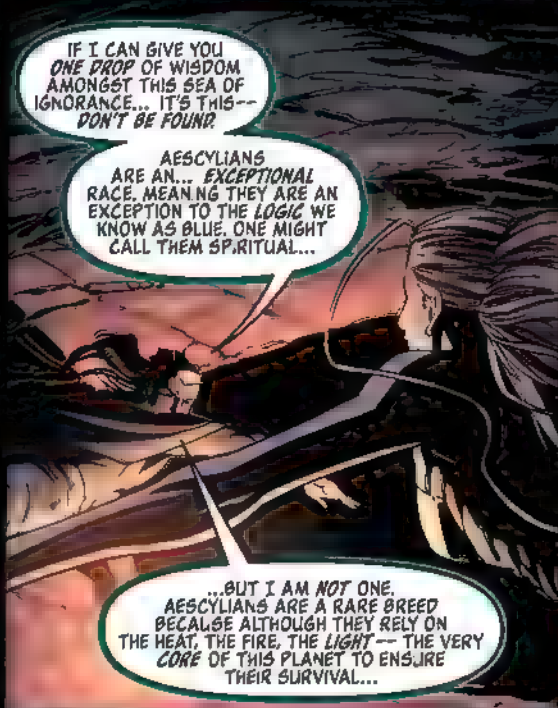
THE NAMELESS
DRIFT SEPARATES
THE NAMELESS PLATEAU
FROM THE GATEWAY
TO SABA.

OR WE
CAN REFER TO IT AS
UNCHARTED WATERS.

AND THIS IS
THE WAY TO—

-- AESCYLOT. YES.

THE SPARK OF
THE ABYSS.



IF I CAN GIVE YOU
ONE DROP OF WISDOM
AMONGST THIS SEA OF
IGNORANCE... IT'S THIS--
DON'T BE FOUND.

AESCYLIANS
ARE AN... EXCEPTIONAL
RACE, MEANING THEY ARE AN
EXCEPTION TO THE LOGIC WE
KNOW AS BLUE. ONE MIGHT
CALL THEM SPIRITUAL...

...BUT I AM NOT ONE.
AESCYLIANS ARE A RARE BREED
BECAUSE ALTHOUGH THEY RELY ON
THE HEAT, THE FIRE, THE LIGHT -- THE VERY
CORE OF THIS PLANET TO ENSURE
THEIR SURVIVAL...

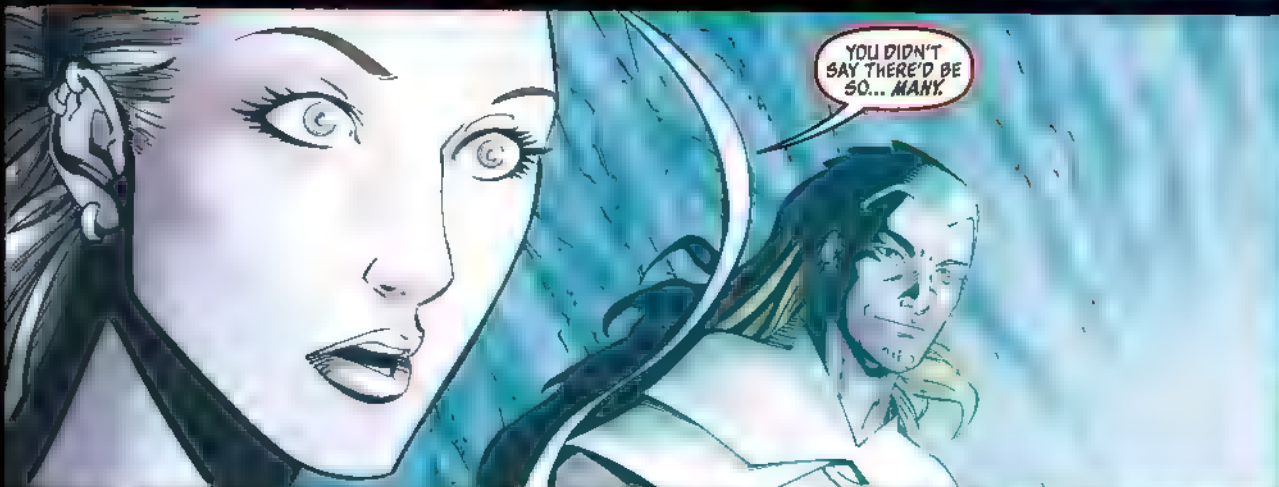


...THEY HAVE
YET TO FIND TRUE
ENLIGHTENMENT.



SO BE
WEARY, AND BE
VIGILANT.

WE'RE HERE.



YOU DIDN'T
SAY THERE'D BE
SO... MANY.



YOU NEVER ASKED.



WHY ARE THERE SO MANY?
HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO
KNOW WHO'S COMING TO TAKE?

THAT, MY DEAR,
IS THE POINT.

COUNTLESS TIMES AGO... THE AECYLANS
CREATED THIS MINE TO MARK THEIR ESCAPE
FROM THE BLACK YOU SEE. THE BLACK WERE
IN THE MIST OF BATTLE ONCE AGAIN.

TO ENTER A FALSE HYDROPORT IS NOT SOMETHING
ANY SENTIENT LIFE FORM CAN SURVIVE—BLACK OR
NOT. ONLY THE AECYLANS WERE NOT THEIR TARGET
TO BEGIN WITH—THEY WERE ONLY IN THE WAY.

BUT COULDN'T THE BLACK
SIMPLY DESTROY THE FALSE
PORTS? SURE, THEY'RE
POWERFUL...

IT WASN'T ABOUT
POWER TO THEM...

IT WAS ABOUT RESPECT.

THE BLACK SEE THE WATER
AS YOU SEE THE LIFE OF A
BLUE—SACRED TO DESTROY
A HYDROPORT—EVEN ONE
MADE BY THE BLUE—IS
CONSIDERED THE HIGHEST
FORM OF DISRESPECT.

BESIDES, LIKE I SAID, IT
WASN'T THE AECYLANS THE
BLACK WERE FIGHTING AGAINST.



BUT YOU, KIANI.
YOU ARE POWERFUL
ENOUGH TO REVEAL THE ONE
TRUE PATH TO AESCYLOT. YOU
CAN BRING DOWN ALL OF
THESE FALSE PORTS WITH
MERELY A THOUGHT.

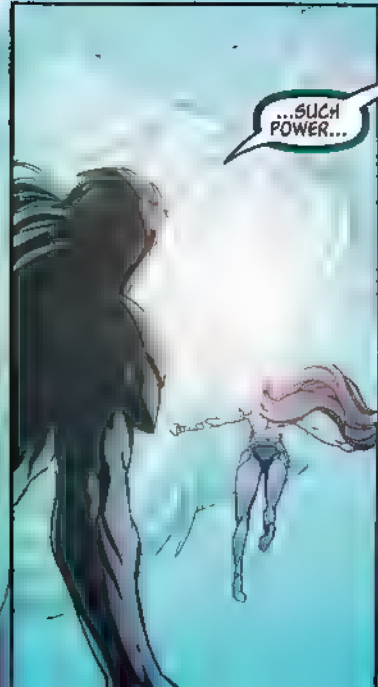
WITH YOU...
IT IS POSSIBLE.

I DON'T
NEED CONVINCING,
MASACAS. THIS
POWER WITHIN ME...
IT WANTS OUT...

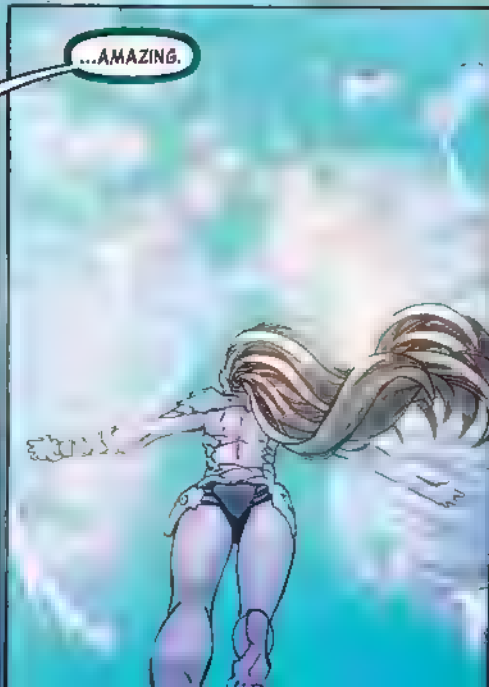
...AND
I WANT TO
LET IT...



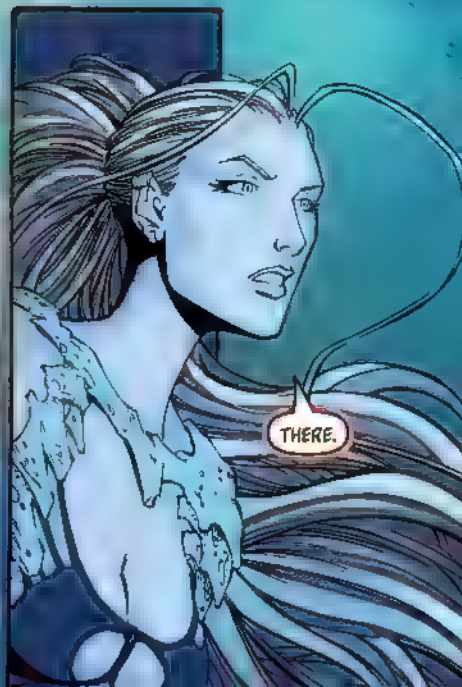
...OUT!!!



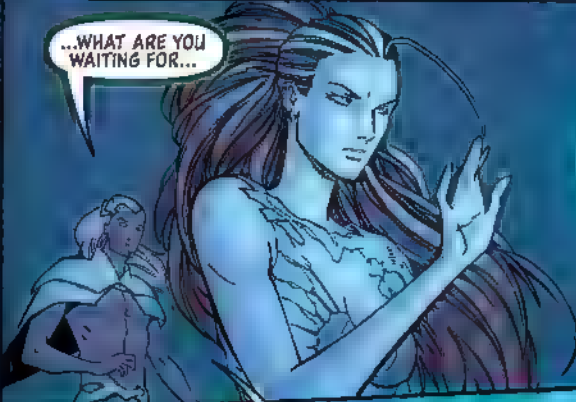
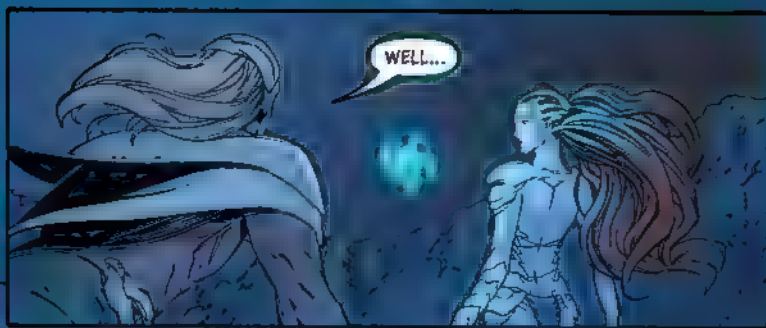
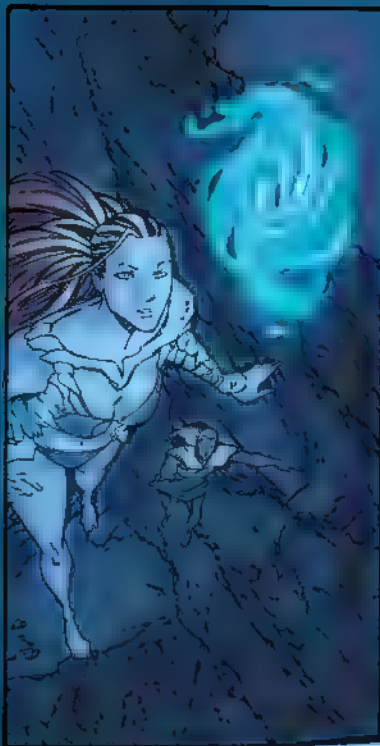
...SUCH POWER...



...AMAZING.



THERE.



...TODAY
BEGINS THE REST
OF YOUR LIFE...

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!



...OR ITS END.



TO BE
CONTINUED...

ASPEN
Vol. 1

#3
OF 4
COVER A

20 FATHOM KIVANIL



ASPEN
Vol. 1

#3
OF 4
COVER B

MICHAEL TURNER'S
20 FATHOM DEPT.



VOLUME ONE Issue Three of Four

VINCE HERNANDEZ

— Story —

MARCUS TO

— Pencils —

DON HO & SAI REGLA

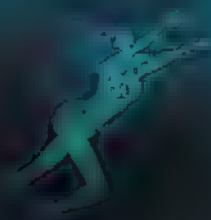
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MICHAEL TURNER'S FATHOM: KIANI™ Vol. 1 Issue 3

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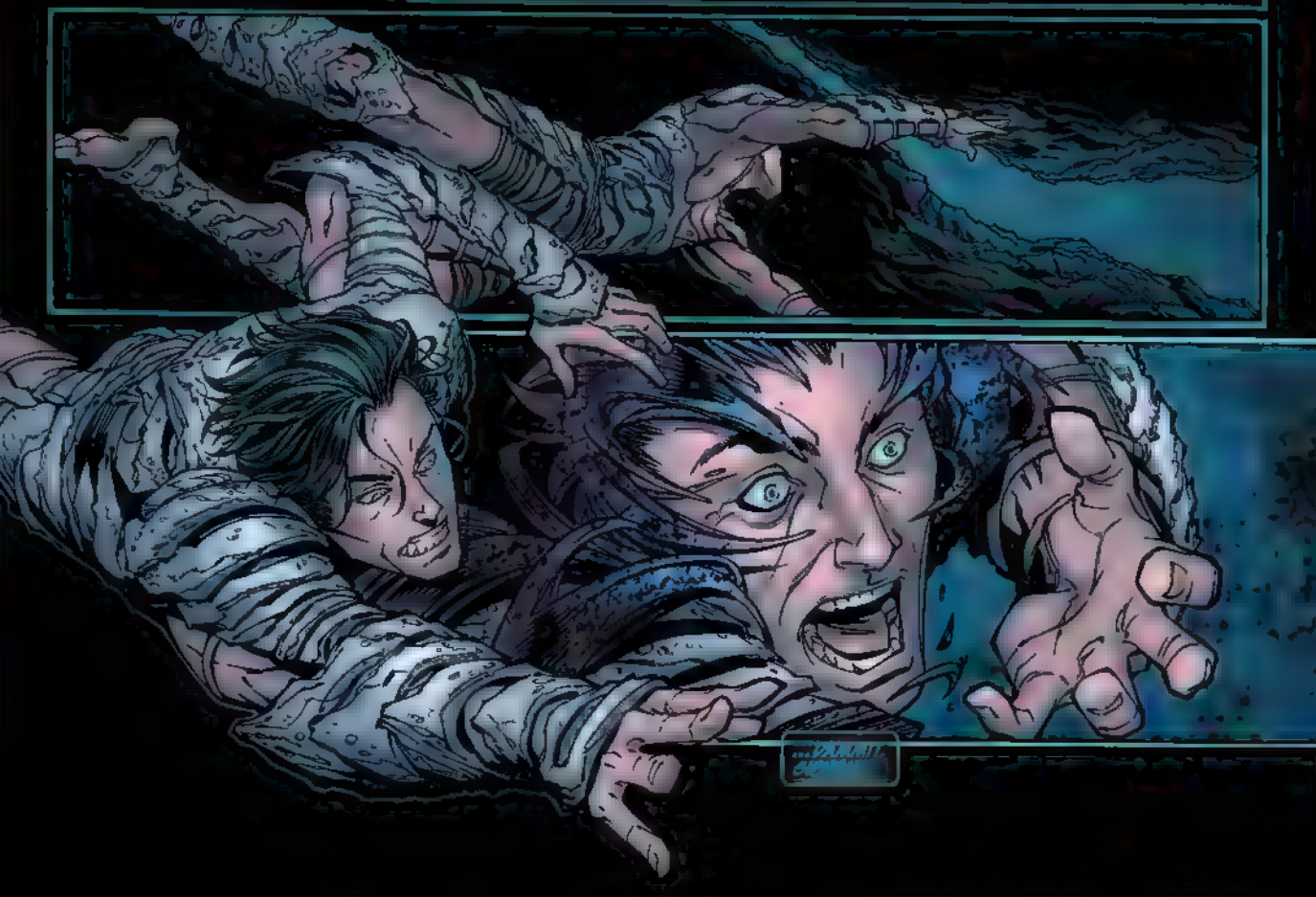
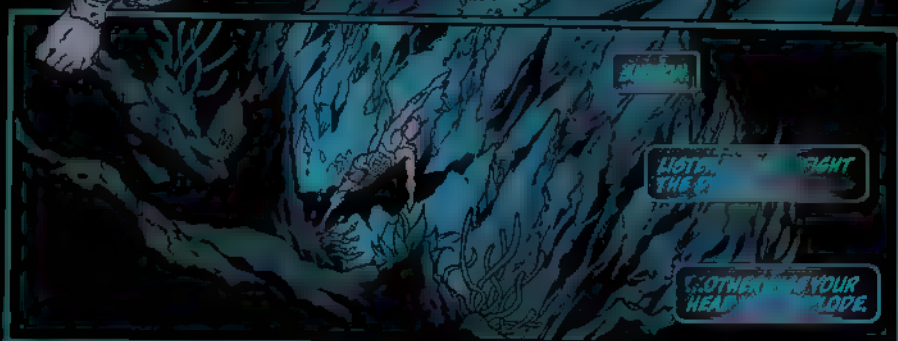
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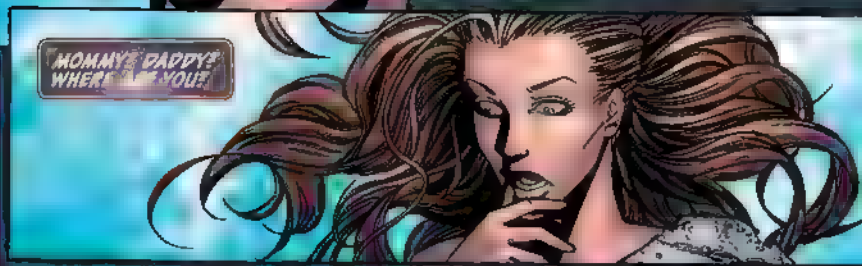
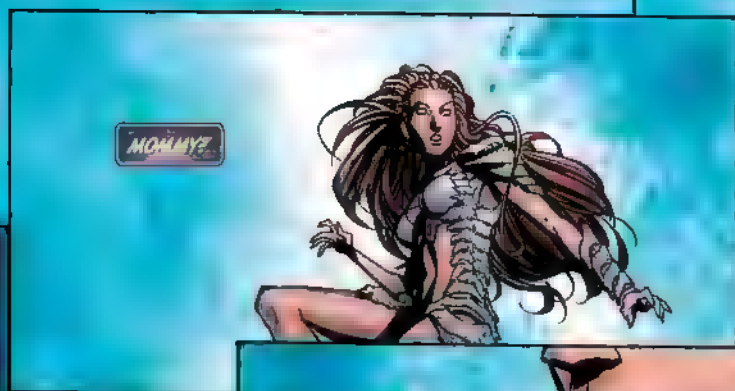
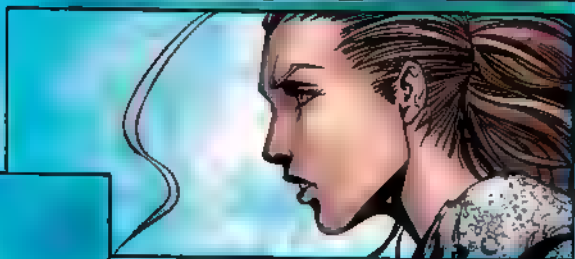
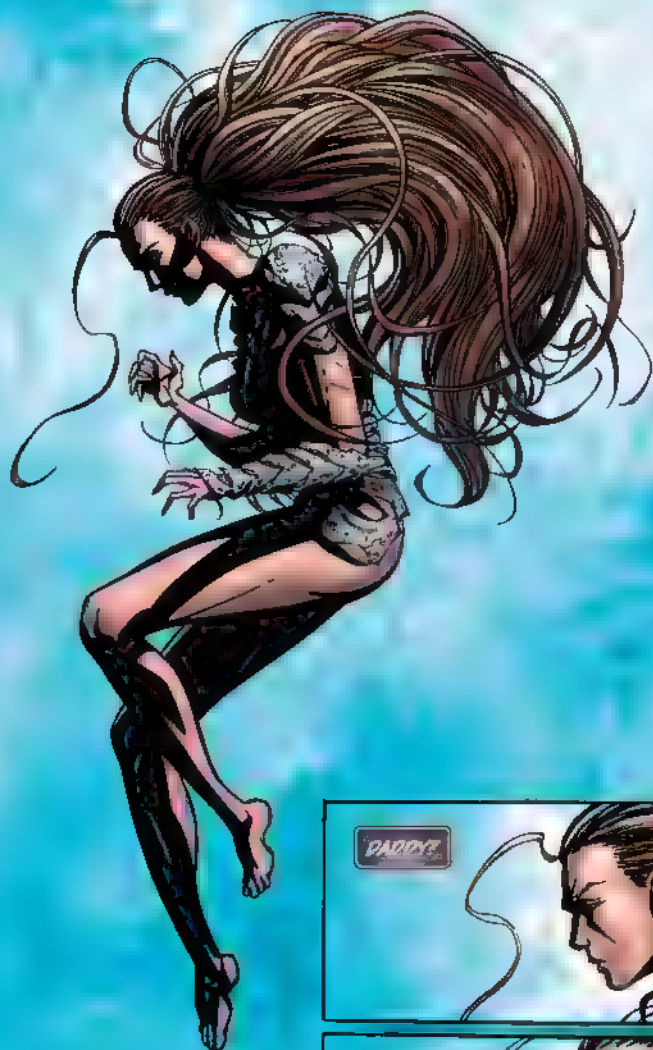
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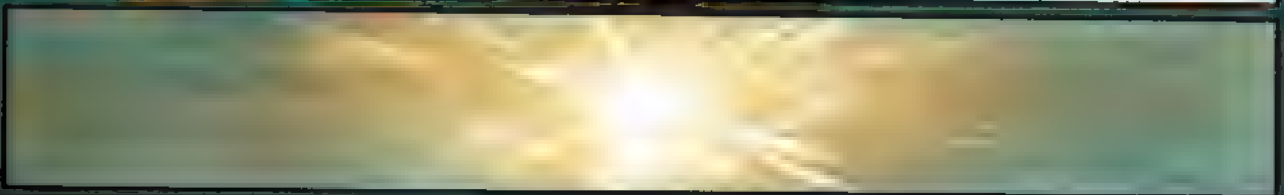
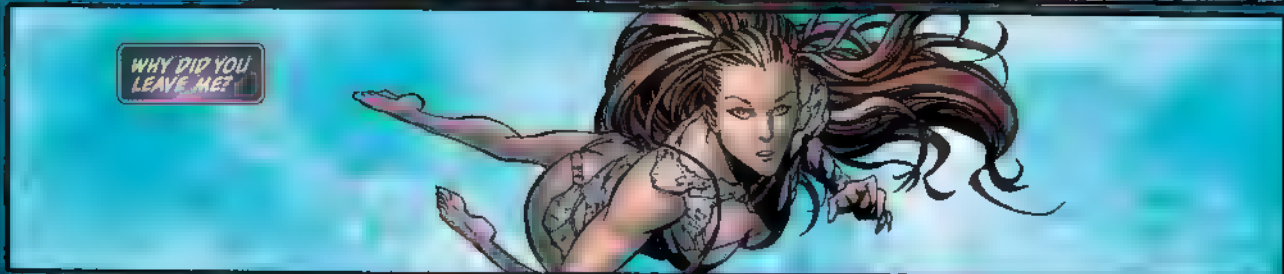
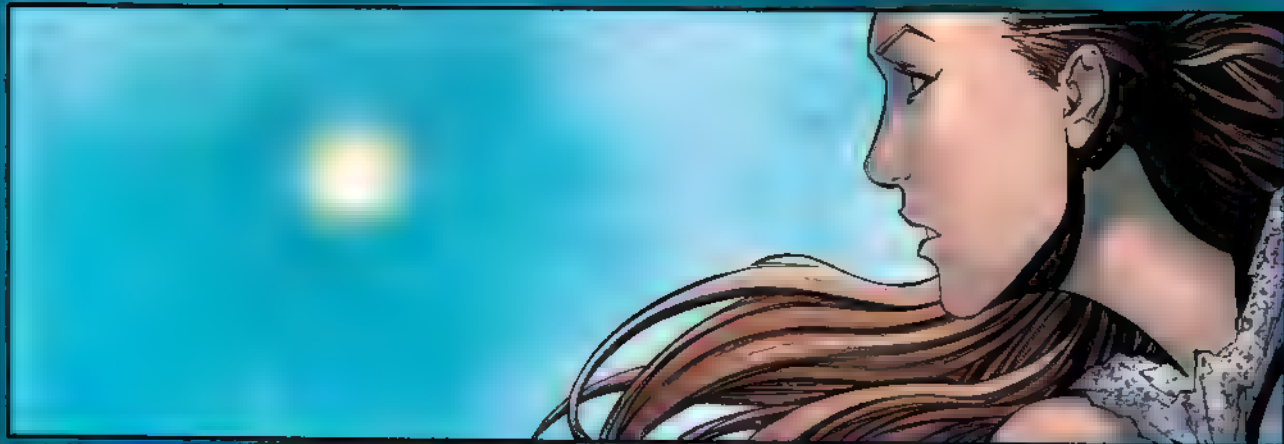
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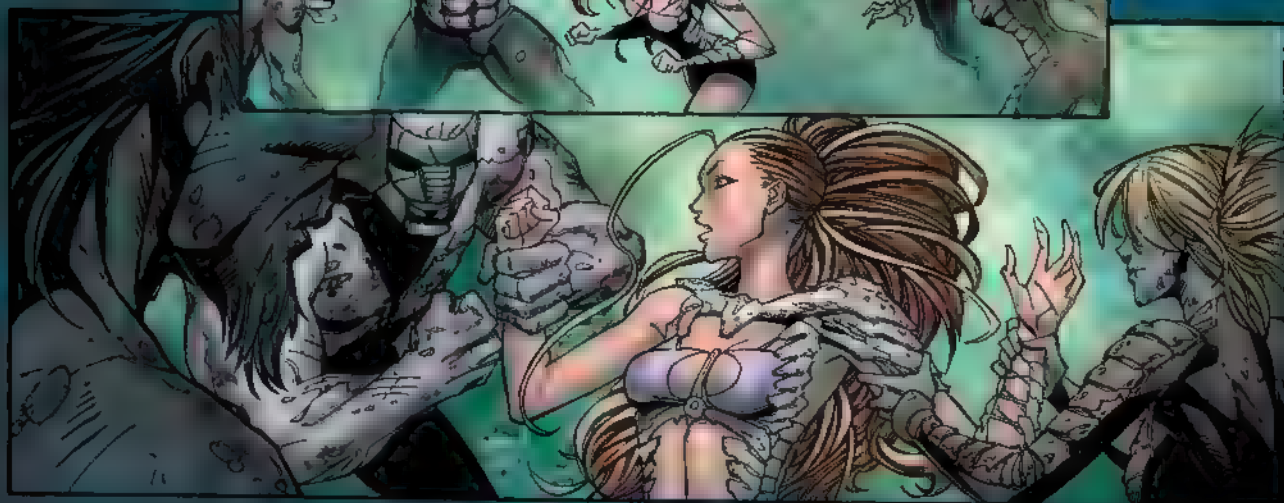
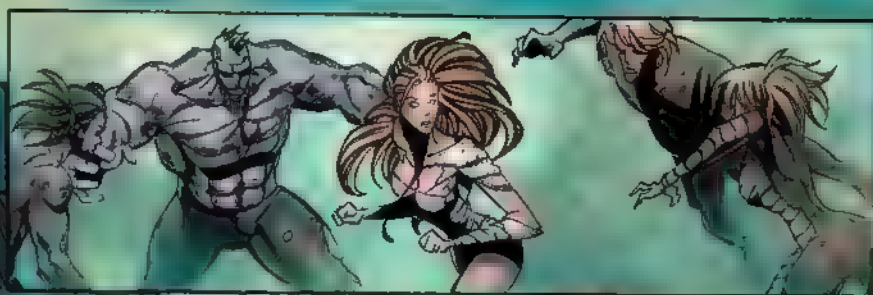
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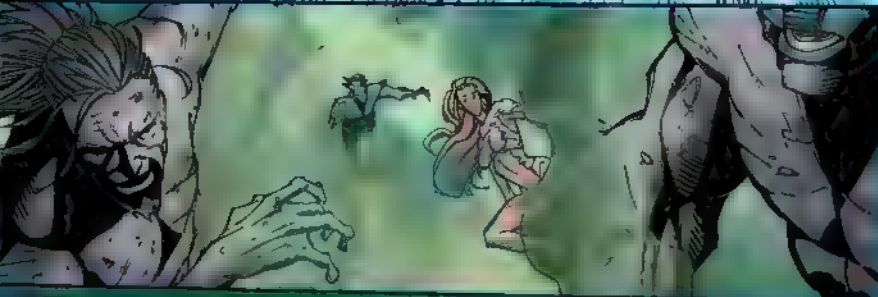
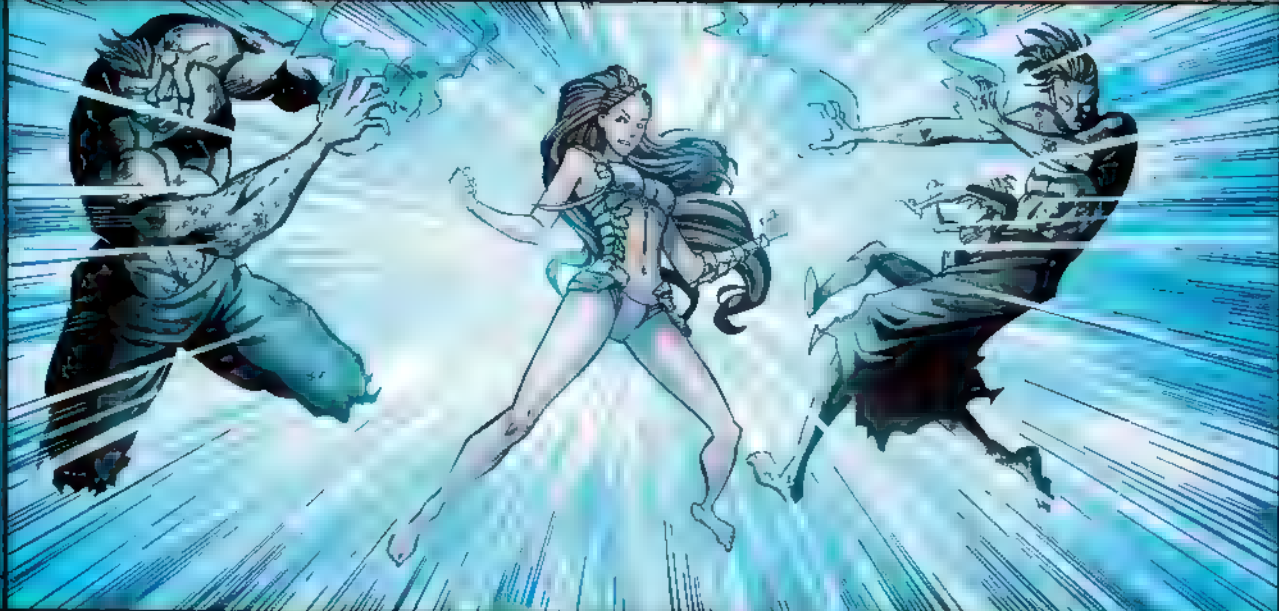
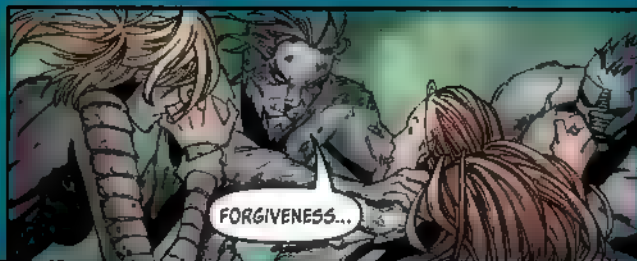


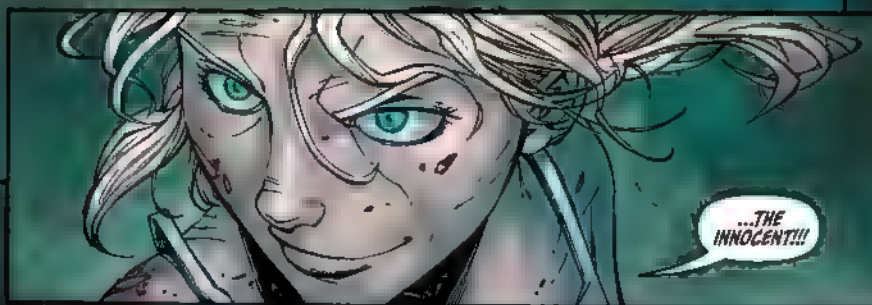






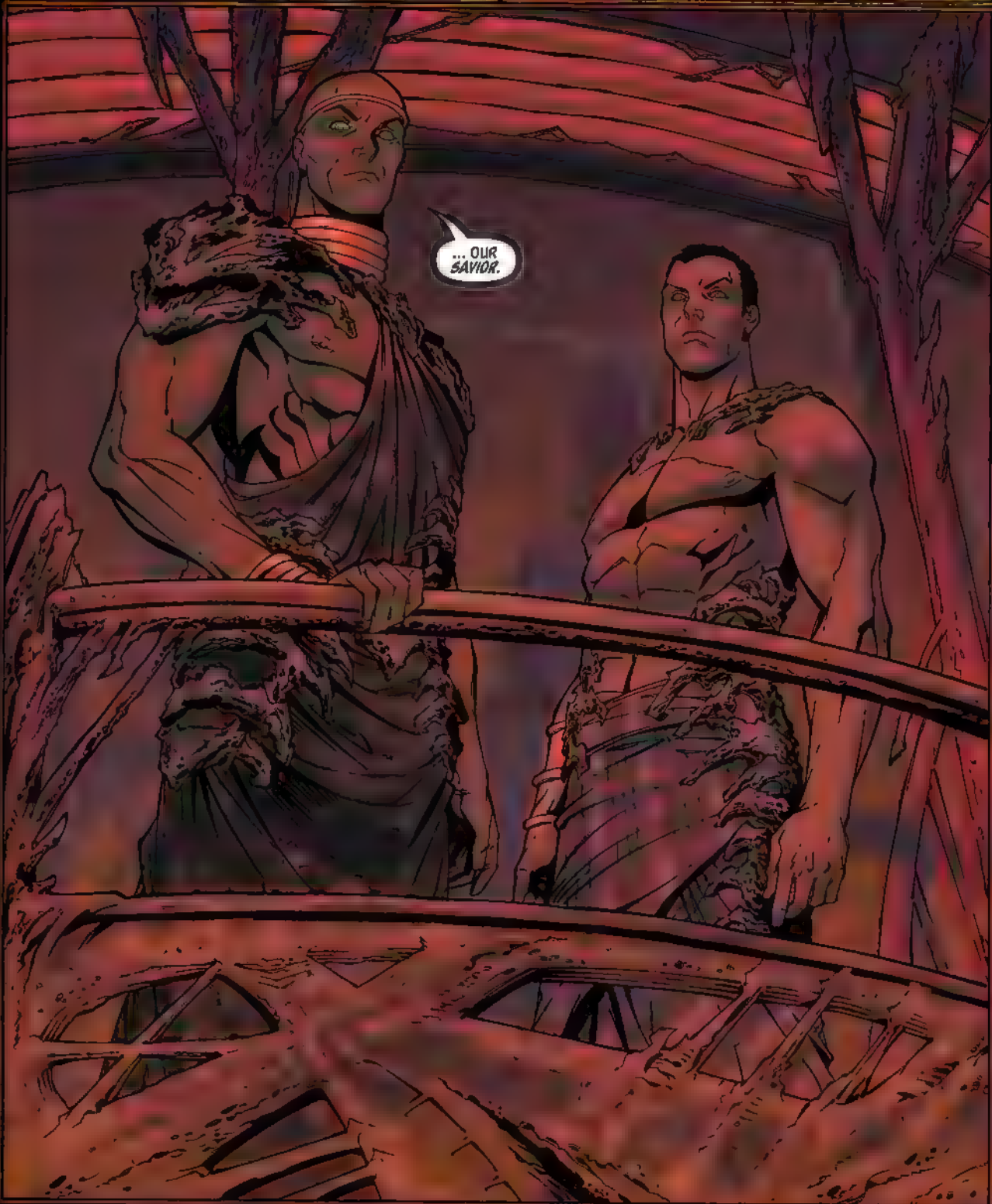






АHHH!





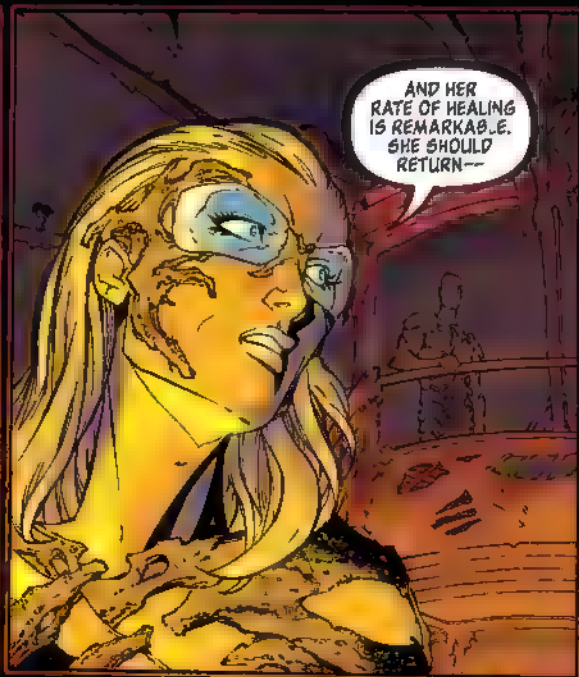


WHAT DO YOU SAY OLD WOMAN? HOW LONG BEFORE SHE WILL RETURN TO SOLID FORM?

IT'S HARD TO SAY, CONSUL, SIR, COMING THROUGH THE SACRED GATEWAY AS SHE DID.

THE TANK'S BEEN IDLE FOR SO LONG, I WAS SHOCKED THE ARMS STILL MAINTAINED THEIR MOBILITY.

BUT HER FABRIC IS OF ELITE NATURE. A RARE SPECIMEN IN ANY CASE.



AND HER RATE OF HEALING IS REMARKABLE. SHE SHOULD RETURN--



-- RETURN TO LEAD US TO OUR FREEDOM.

OSIDIAN, I CANNOT LIE, I'VE NOT FELT THIS... ALIVE SINCE OUR REVOLUTION. WE ARE CLOSER THAN EVER TO OUR GOAL, BROTHER.

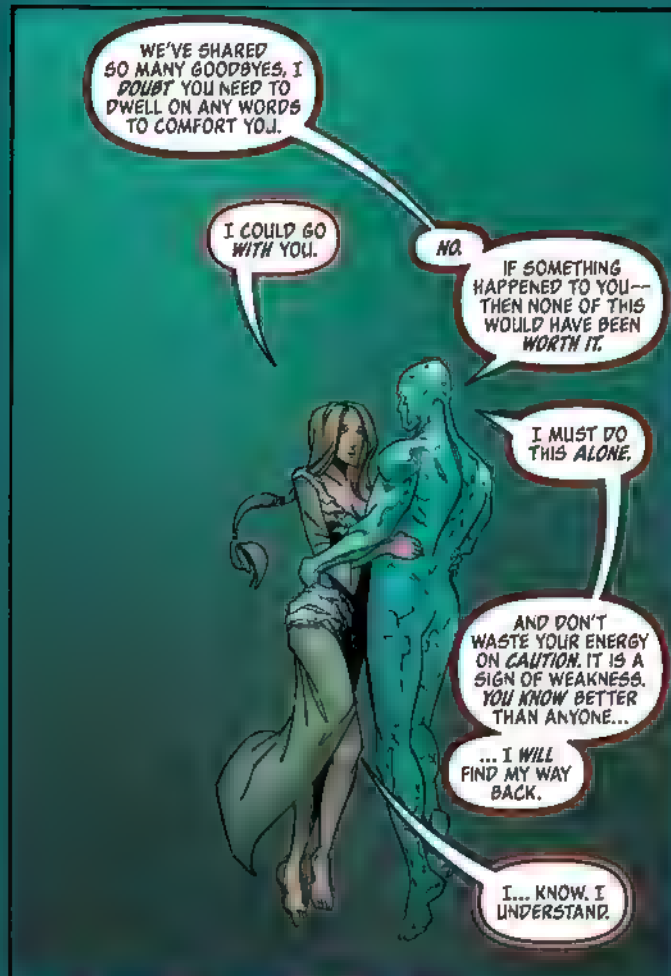
OUR EXODUS.

I CAN'T DWELL IN FALSEHOODS EITHER. I MUST ADMIT I DOUBTED YOUR UNWAVERING FAITH. PERHAPS OUR CURSE LEFT ME IN A STATE OF DENIAL.

BUT HERE WE ARE.



YES, HERE WE ARE.



WE'VE SHARED SO MANY GOODBYES, I DOUBT YOU NEED TO DWELL ON ANY WORDS TO COMFORT YOU.

I COULD GO WITH YOU.

NO.

IF SOMETHING HAPPENED TO YOU-- THEN NONE OF THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN WORTH IT.

I MUST DO THIS ALONE.

AND DON'T WASTE YOUR ENERGY ON CAUTION. IT IS A SIGN OF WEAKNESS. YOU KNOW BETTER THAN ANYONE...

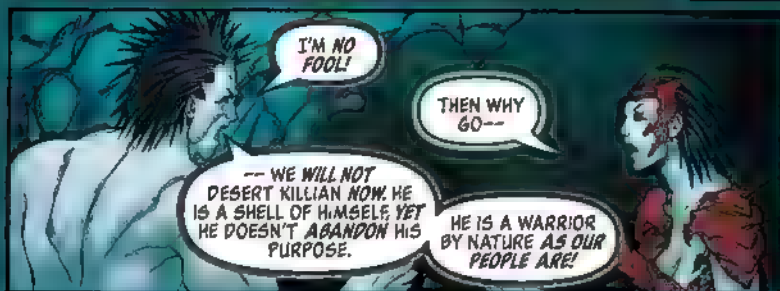
... I WILL FIND MY WAY BACK.

I... KNOW. I UNDERSTAND.



I DON'T UNDERSTAND!

WE ARE GOING TO FOLLOW KILLIAN?? WE'LL DIE! ALL OF US! YOU HAVE SAID AS MUCH BEFORE. IT'S A FOOL'S ERRAND, CAN'T YOU SEE THAT?



I'M NO FOOL!

THEN WHY GO--

-- WE WILL NOT DESERT KILLIAN NOW. HE IS A SHELL OF HIMSELF, YET HE DOESN'T ABANDON HIS PURPOSE.

HE IS A WARRIOR BY NATURE AS OUR PEOPLE ARE!

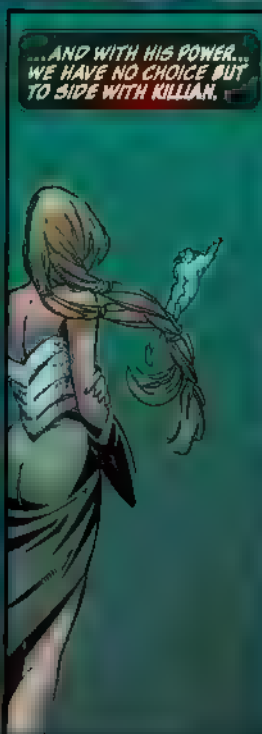


BUT YOU WILL ABANDON LOGIC?



LOOK AROUND YOU, TERZA. THE SEAS ARE RIFE WITH TURMOIL. EVEN THE ELITE BLUE STRUGGLE TO RECOVER AFTER THE HUMAN INVASION.

OUR PEOPLE ARE LOOKED ON AS REBELS ALREADY. FACE IT... WE ARE ALONE...

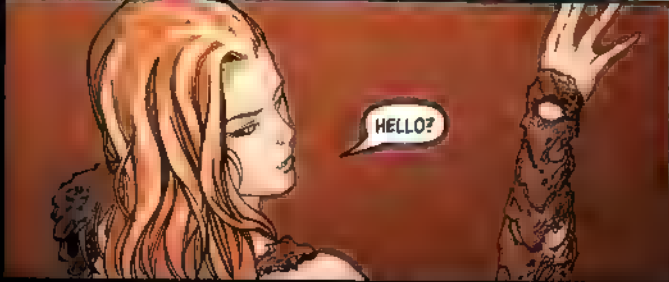
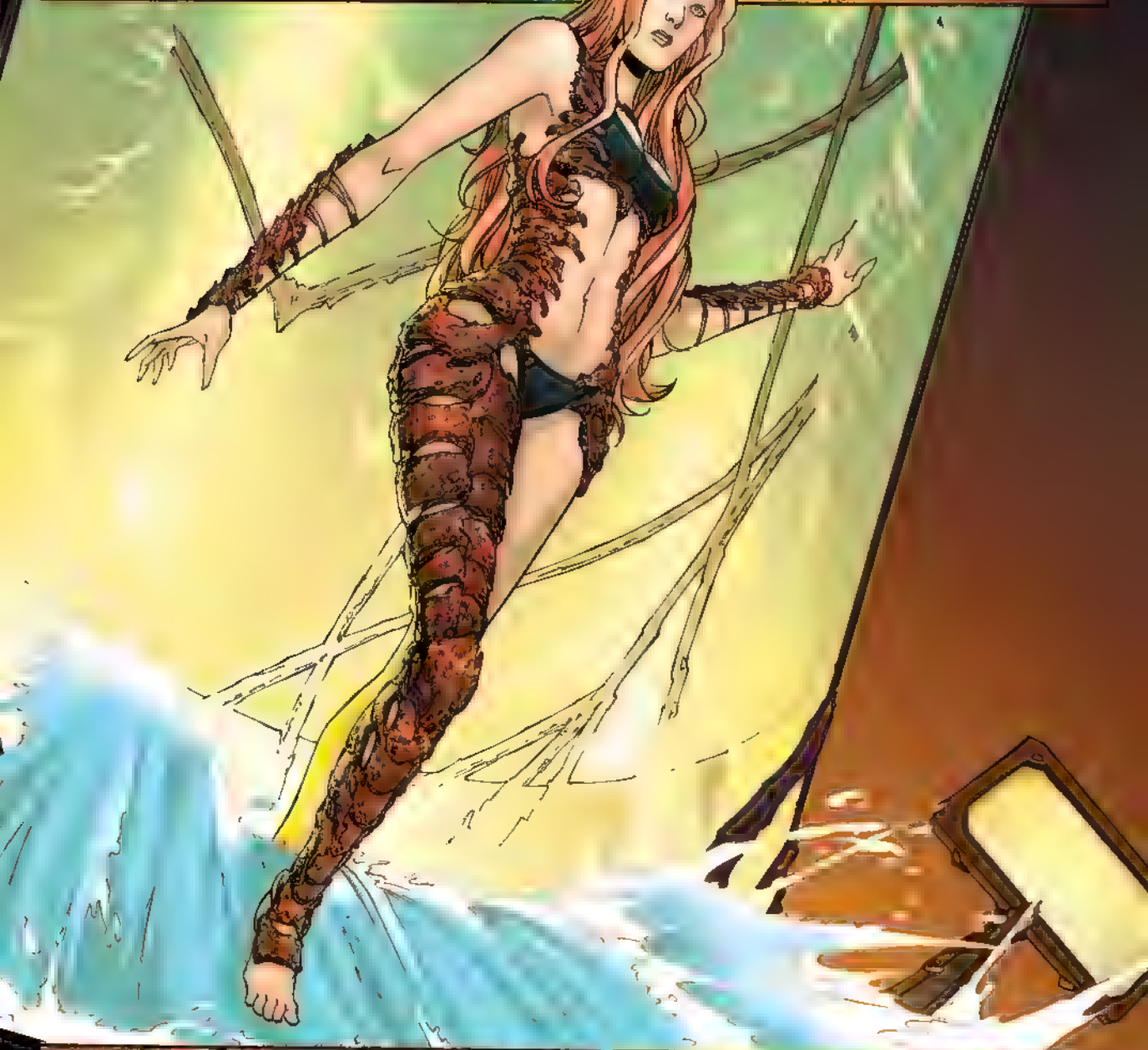
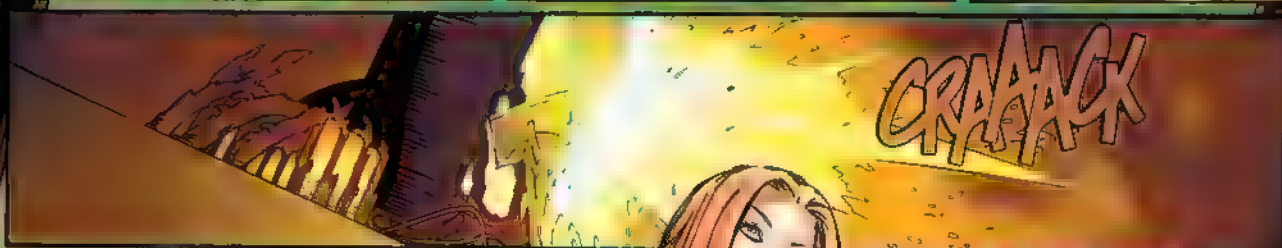
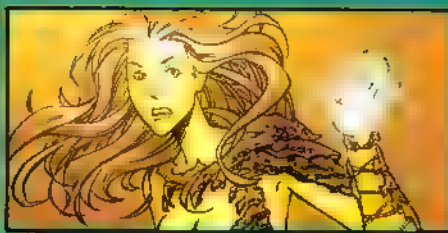


...AND WITH HIS POWER... WE HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO SIDE WITH KILLIAN.

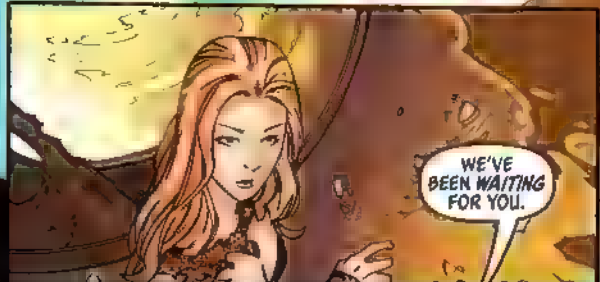


WE SHALL FOLLOW KILLIAN TO AESCYLOT.

AND THIS TIME WITH THE FURY OF MY ENTIRE LEGION.



HELLO?

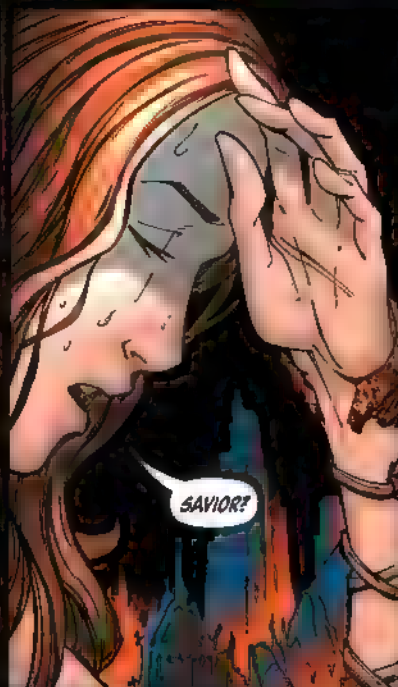


WE'VE
BEEN WAITING
FOR YOU.



AWAITING
YOUR RETURN,
SAVIOR.

IT IS
AN HONOR TO
BE IN YOUR
PRESENCE.



SAVIOR?



THIS... IS...
AESCYLOT?



YES.



WELCOME
HOME.



OF COURSE, YOU *MUST* BE WONDERING ABOUT YOUR ARMOR.

THE-- *ELITE*-- ARMOR... DID NOT SURVIVE YOUR ARRIVAL THROUGH THE GATEWAY. IT *SHATTERED* UPON IMPACT THROUGH THE PORT. UNTIL A FEW MOMENTS AGO, WE WERE NOT SURE YOU WOULD MAKE IT EITHER. YOUR RESTORATION PROCESS WAS--AS YOU DISCOVERED FIRSTHAND, QUITE A *SURREAL EXPERIENCE*-- YOUR IMMEDIATE POST-FORM RECOVERY HOWEVER, WAS EVEN MORE...
MIRACULOUS

WE NEVER LOST FAITH.

AND OUR FAITH BROUGHT YOU TO US. FORGIVE ME, I'VE LOST MY HEAD IN THE EXCITEMENT OF YOUR ARRIVAL. MY NAME IS YOREN OF THE SLII PROVINCE, HE, MY BROTHER OSIDIAN, OF ALIKE.

THE CREATION OF YOUR NEW ARMOR I CREDIT TO HIS SKILLFUL HAND. WE ATTEMPTED TO RECREATE EVERY MINUTE DETAIL OF YOUR REMARKABLE GENETIC FABRIC, ADDING OUR OWN-- *SPECIAL*-- TOUCHES HERE AND THERE. OSIDIAN CAN FILL YOU IN ON THE *FINER DETAILS* IF YOU DESIRE.

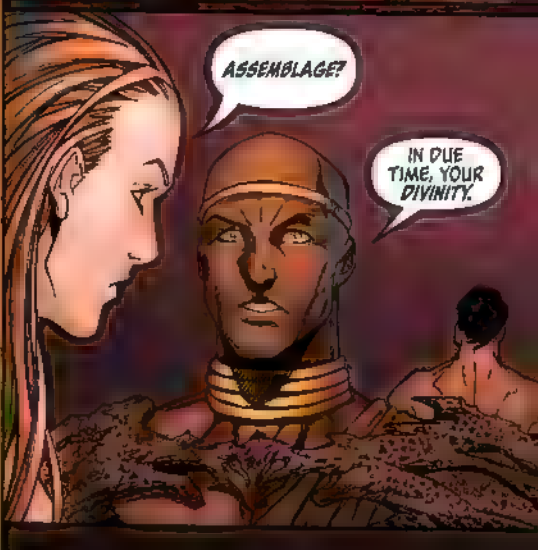


OF COURSE. IT WAS AN HONOR. YOUR BODY IS A MASTERPIECE.



BROTHER, LEAVE US TO PREPARE FOR THE ASSEMBLAGE. SEE TO OUR... VISITORS.

AT ONCE.



ASSEMBLAGE?

IN DUE TIME, YOUR DIVINITY.

IT WAS
FOOLISH OF YOU
TO DIVE AS DEEP
AS YOU DID.

I HAD NO CHOICE.
YOU'RE THE ONLY PERSON
I KNOW WHO CAN HELP ME.
SO FIGURE, I MAKE THE
HIGHEST RANK IMAGINABLE,
AND NOW THE ELITE COUNCIL
SEEMS AS POWERLESS
AS EVER.

THE COUNCIL
KNOWS THIS, WHICH IS
WHY THEY HAVE CHOSEN THE
ROUTE OF PASSIVITY. BUT
SIPHON, TO SEEK AID FROM
OUTSIDE THE INNER CIRCLE-- THAT
TAKES COURAGE. NOT A TRAIT
OF AN ELITE COUNCIL MEMBER.
I'VE ALWAYS ADMIRER
YOUR SPIRIT.

WHICH IS
WHY YOU LEFT
US?

YOU STILL
CARRY RESENTMENT?
AS A GENUINE LEADER OF THE
PEOPLE, DO YOU NOW SEE OUR
ACTIONS IN A CLEARER LIGHT?
OR MORE--SO, DO YOU AT LEAST
RESPECT OUR OBJECTIVE NOW?
THE HUMANS...

...THE
HUMANS, THEY DO
NOT RESPECT OUR
RIGHT TO LIVE.

WHY
COULDN'T YOU
TELL US YOU WERE
A BLACK? KIANI AND
I, WE WOULD'VE
ACCEPTED YOU.

ACCEPTANCE
IS NOT WHAT
WE SEEK!

FORGET IT.

DISCUSSING
SUCH MATTERS
IS IRRELEVANT. OUR
ACTIONS NOW...
INEVITABLE.

I DIDN'T
COME FOR
ME.

I KNOW
ONE PERSON ISN'T
ENOUGH TO CONVINCE
YOUR K.N.D TO DIVERT
THEIR... CAMPAIGN OF
DESTRUCTION...

... BUT
FROM A STRATEGIC
STANDPOINT, IT MIGHT
BE BENEFICIAL FOR YOU TO
KNOW THE WHEREABOUTS
OF ONE OF THE MOST
POWERFUL BEINGS ON
THE PLANET.



IT EASES ME
TO FORGIVE.

THE BREATHER PART OF
MY LIFE'S BEEN SPENT
IN REDEMPTION.

IT IS OF MY
OWN CHOICE.

I ONCE BELIEVED I HAD
TO SEPARATE MY AFFAIRS
FROM MY FAMILY. IF YOU
COULD... I COULD... SUCH.

NEVER SEEN THE
TWO COMING LINK.

I GAVE UP THAT LINK ONCE
BEFORE. SHE WOULD SAY
ABANDONING ME WENT OF IT.

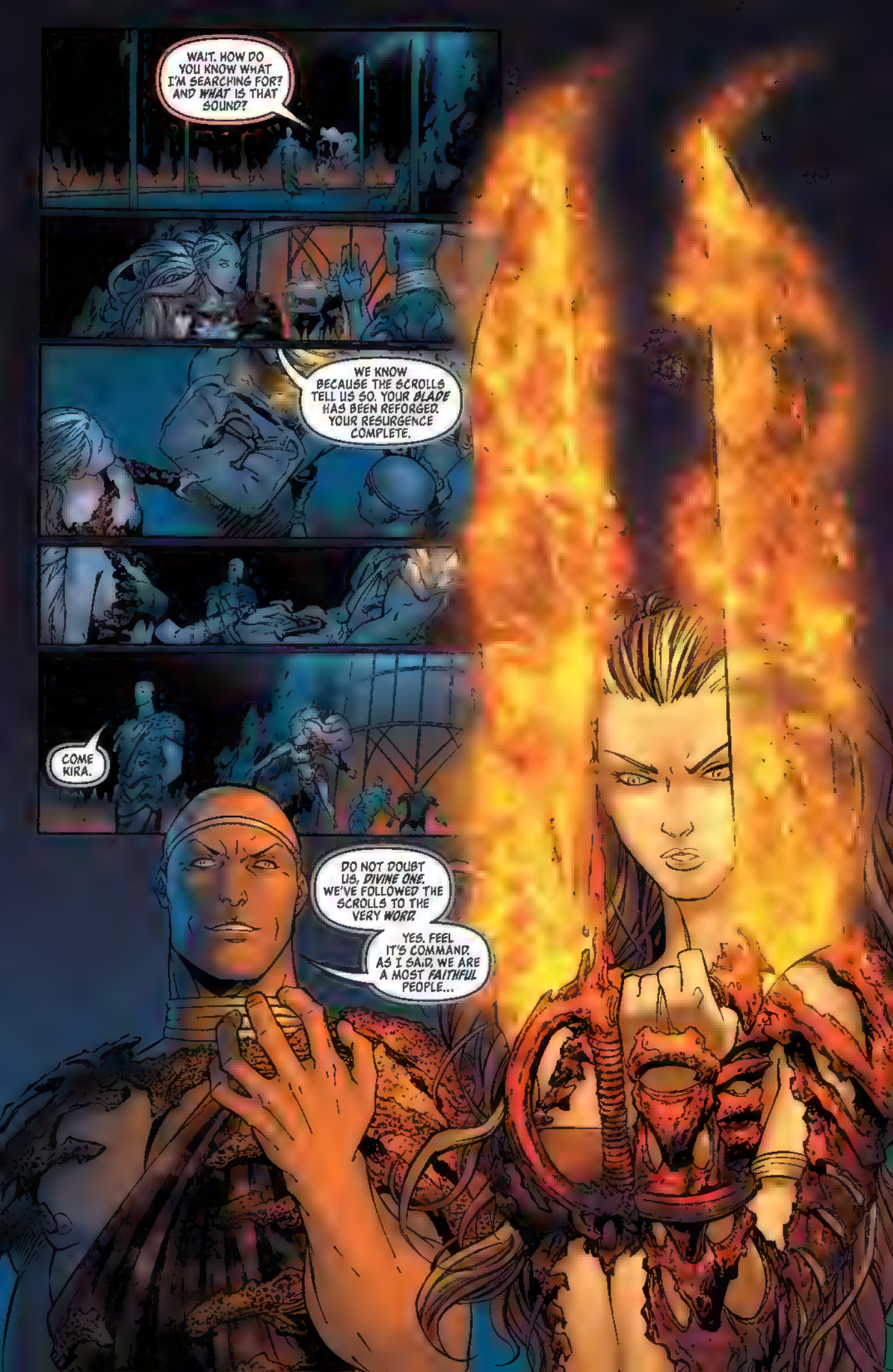
MY FAMILY AND ACTIONS
BOTH NOW A BURNING CIRCLE.

A CIRCLE
HOWEVER.



WE HAVE PROTECTED
IT TO THE
END.





WAIT. HOW DO
YOU KNOW WHAT
I'M SEARCHING FOR?
AND WHAT IS THAT
SOUND?

WE KNOW
BECAUSE THE SCROLLS
TELL US SO. YOUR *BLADE*
HAS BEEN REFORGED.
YOUR RESURGENCE
COMPLETE.

COME
KIRA.

DO NOT DOUBT
US, *DIVINE ONE*.
WE'VE FOLLOWED THE
SCROLLS TO THE
VERY WORD.

YES. FEEL
IT'S COMMAND.
AS I SAID, WE ARE
A MOST FAITHFUL
PEOPLE...



AND
WE ARE YOUR
SLAVES.



Vol. 1

#4

OF 4
COVER A

MICHAEL TURNER'S FATHOM RIVANIL





ASPEN

Vol. 1

#4

OF 4

COVER B

MICHAEL TURNER'S
FATHOM

KIAN!!!



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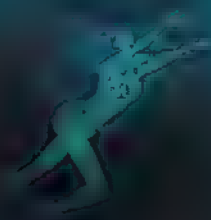
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WHEN.

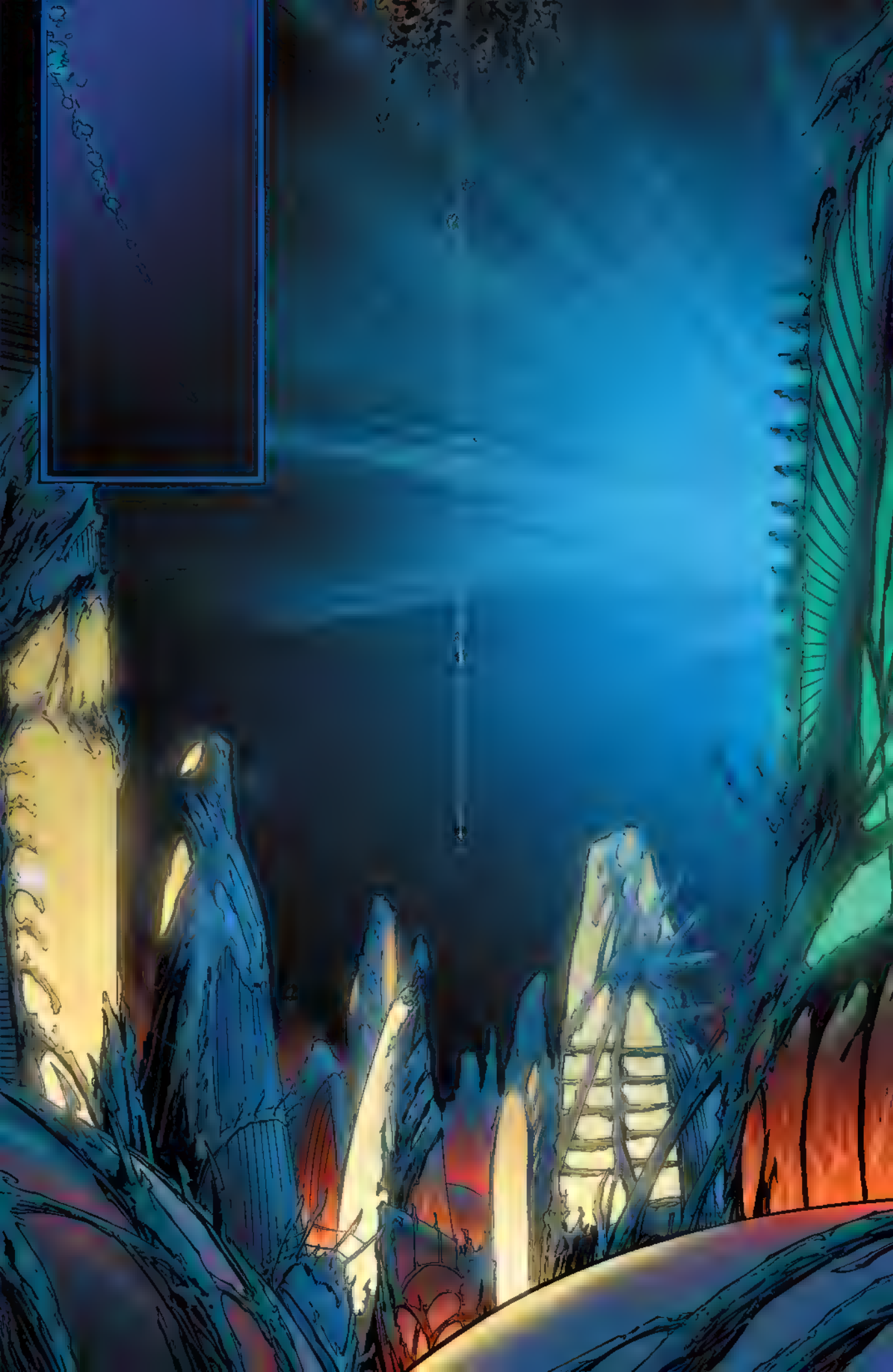
WHY DOES THIS
HAPPEN TO ME?

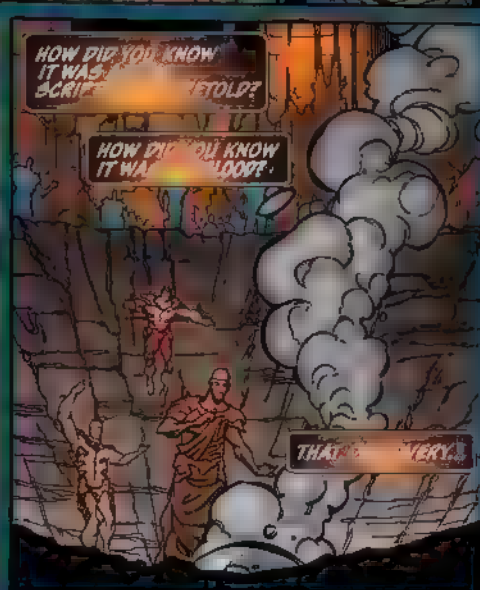
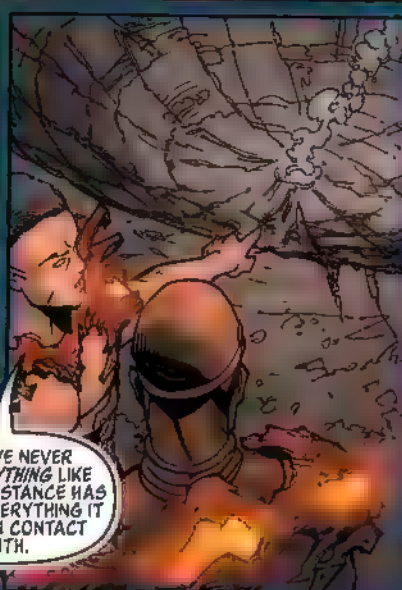
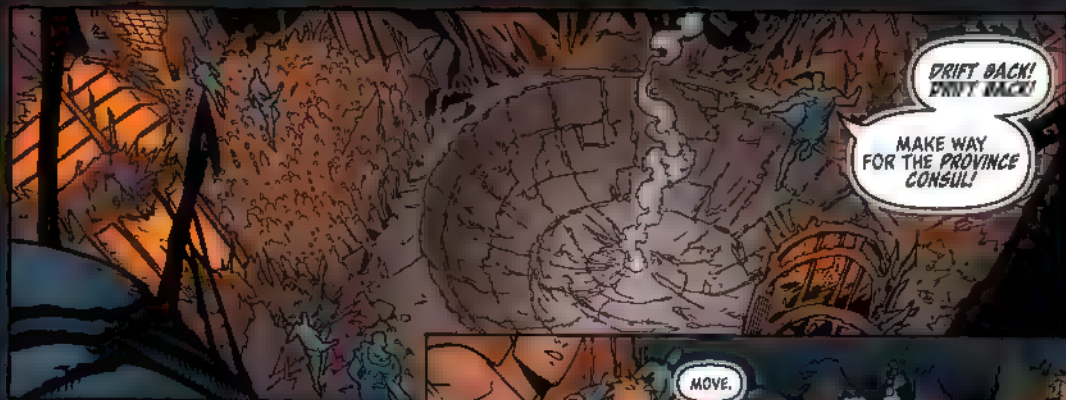
TO US?

OUR FAMILY'S
DESTINY.

...HOPELESS FROM
THE START.

HOW COULD
THIS HAPPEN
ONCE MORE?







QUIET!
PLEASE!

MEMBERS
OF THE FORUM,
I ASK FOR YOUR
SILENCE!

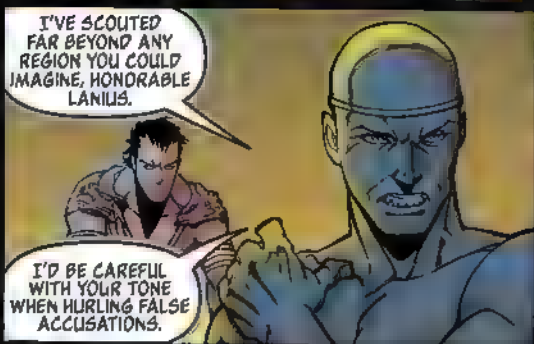
YOU ASK
FOR OUR SILENCE,
YOREN?? YOU'VE HAD
EVERYTHING BUT
THE VOICE OF OUR
OPINION FOR FAR
TOO LONG.



THE FUTURE OF
OUR RACE FACES
CERTAIN EXTINCTION
AND YOU'VE YET TO
FIND A NEW MOLTEN
SOURCE

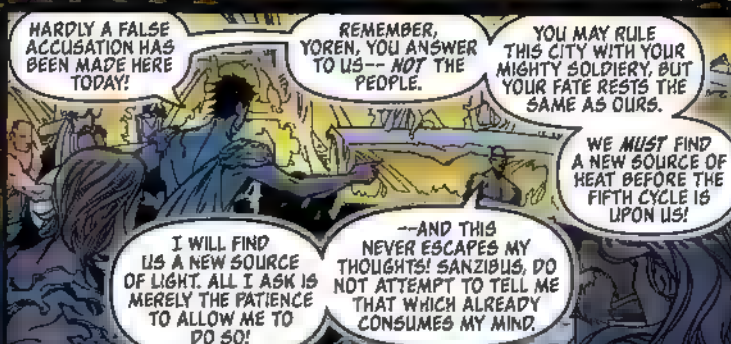
AND NOW, OUR
PEOPLE FACE THE
GRAVE CONSEQUENCE
OF YOUR
MISDIRECTION.

HOW ARE WE TO
SURVIVE WHEN WE'VE
NO NEW SOURCE OF
HEAT? WHEN YOU MADE
NO ATTEMPT TO FIND
A NEW FISSURE?



I'VE SCOUTED
FAR BEYOND ANY
REGION YOU COULD
IMAGINE, HONORABLE
LANIUS.

I'D BE CAREFUL
WITH YOUR TONE
WHEN HURLING FALSE
ACCUSATIONS.



HARDLY A FALSE
ACCUSATION HAS
BEEN MADE HERE
TODAY!

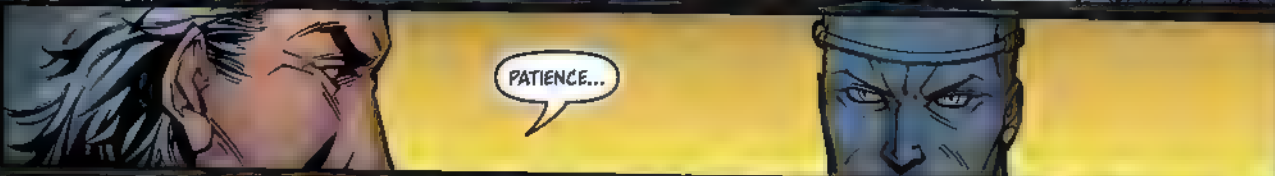
REMEMBER,
YOREN, YOU ANSWER
TO US-- NOT THE
PEOPLE.

YOU MAY RULE
THIS CITY WITH YOUR
MIGHTY SOLDIERY, BUT
YOUR FATE RESTS THE
SAME AS OURS.

WE MUST FIND
A NEW SOURCE OF
HEAT BEFORE THE
FIFTH CYCLE IS
UPON US!

I WILL FIND
US A NEW SOURCE
OF LIGHT. ALL I ASK IS
MERELY THE PATIENCE
TO ALLOW ME TO
DO SO!

--AND THIS
NEVER ESCAPES MY
THOUGHTS! SANZIBUS, DO
NOT ATTEMPT TO TELL ME
THAT WHICH ALREADY
CONSUMES MY MIND.

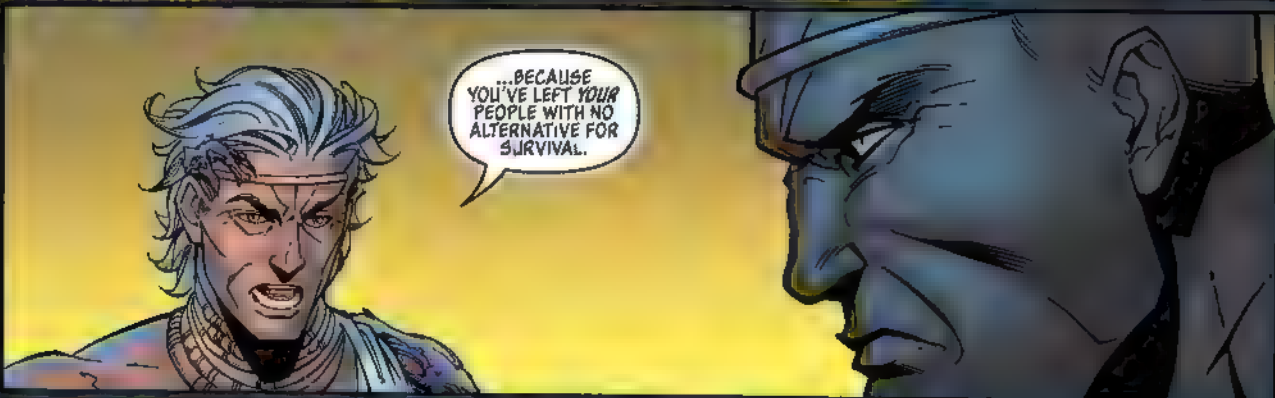


PATIENCE...

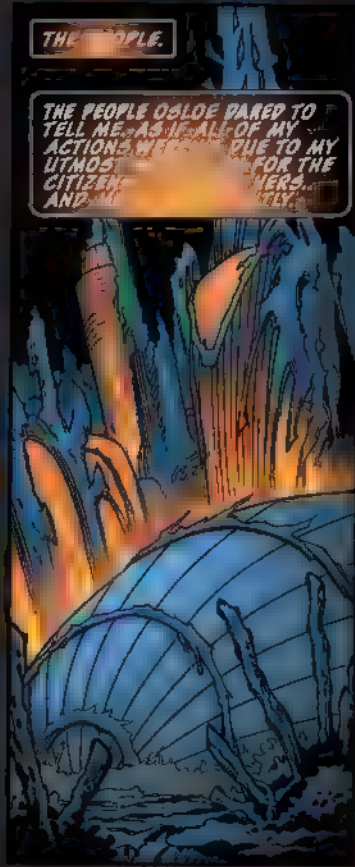


...IS A VIRTUE,
YOREN. SOMETHING
YOU'VE YET TO PROVE
YOU POSSESS.

LET THE DEITIES
OF THE SCRIPTURES
BEAR WITNESS TO
YOUR ACTIONS...



...BECAUSE
YOU'VE LEFT YOUR
PEOPLE WITH NO
ALTERNATIVE FOR
SURVIVAL.

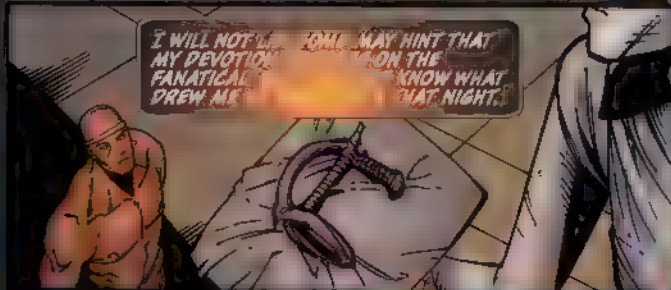


THE PEOPLE.

THE PEOPLE OSLOE DARED TO
TELL ME—AS IF ALL OF MY
ACTIONS WERE DUE TO MY
UTMOST CONCERN FOR THE
CITIZENS OF OSLOE.
AND ME.



17H.

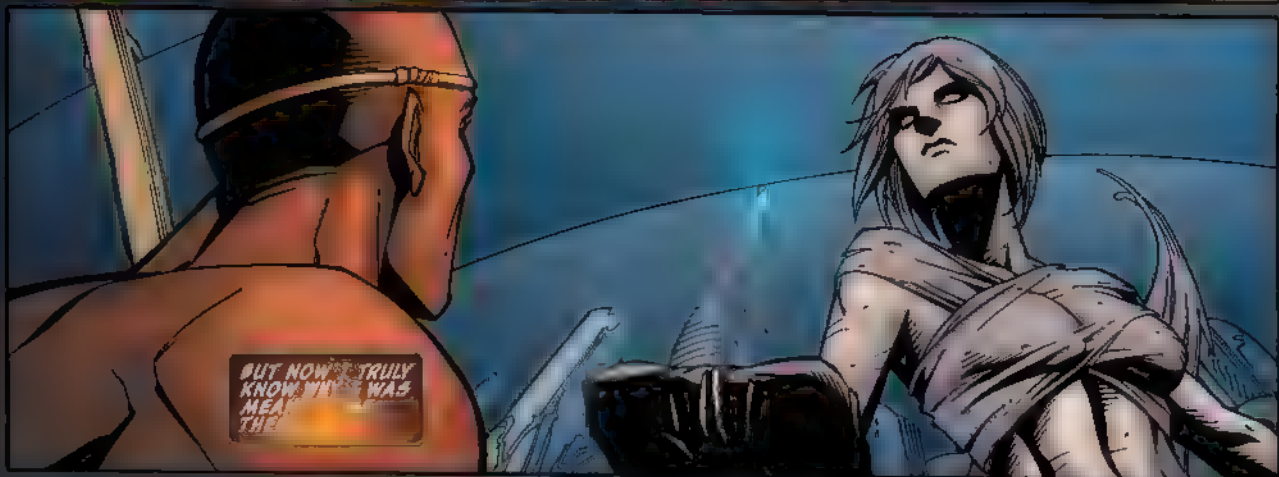


I WILL NOT LET OSLOE WAY HINT THAT
MY DEVOTION TO OSLOE ON THE
FANATICAL SIDE OF THE COIN
DREW ME HERE THAT NIGHT.

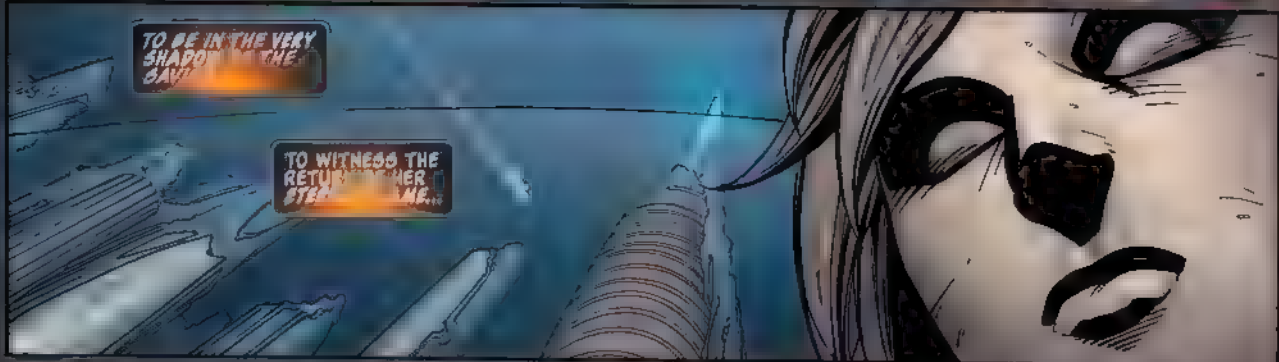


PERHAPS I WAS SEARCHING
FOR THE ONE WHOSE SOUL
WHO ENDURED A SIMILAR
STRUGGLE.

SOMEONE WHO HAD
INDEED BECOME A
SAVIOUR FOR THE PEOPLE.



BUT NOW I TRULY
KNOW WHY OSLOE WAS
MEANT TO BE.



TO BE IN THE VERY
SHADOW OF THE
SAVIOUR.

TO WITNESS THE
RETURN OF HER
STERN FATHER.

AND TO REMIND
ME OF THE IMMENSE
WORD

THOSE GOUNCE SAND
MONGER INDICTED OUR
LEGION. RULE
OF THE

CAN'T THEY SEE
THAT AT MY
CORE I AM NOT A
BLOOD-THIRSTY
DEMON

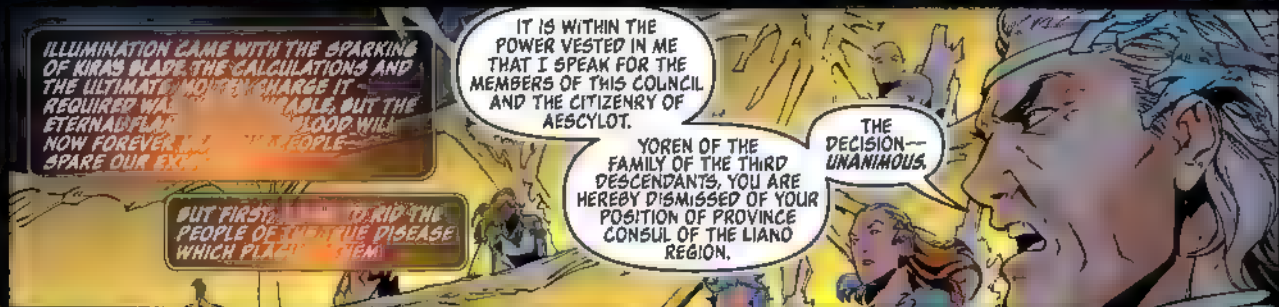
IT MATTERS NOT. I
WILL NOT BE
REMEMBERED FOR
MY DEATH

MY LEGACY WILL
NOT ENDURE
BECAUSE
MY

...NO OTHER...

...IT WILL BE MY
DISCOY WHICH
MAKES ME REIGN.





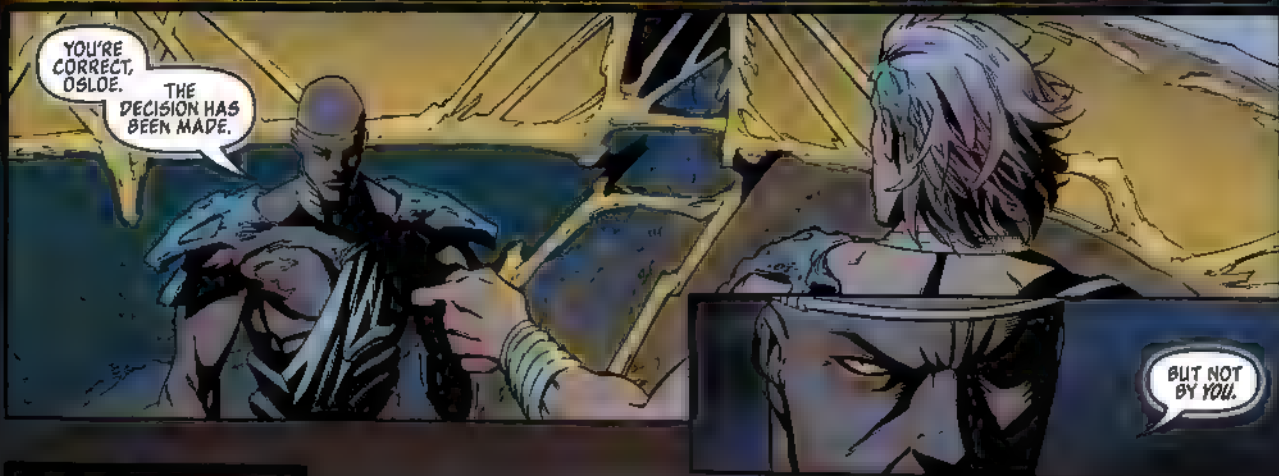
ILLUMINATION CAME WITH THE SPARKING OF KIRAS BLADE. THE CALCULATIONS AND THE ULTIMATE MOUNTAIN CHARGE IT REQUIRED WALKING THE LINE, BUT THE ETERNABLY BLOOD WILL NOW FOREVER BE A PEOPLE SPARE OUR EXISTENCE.

IT IS WITHIN THE POWER VESTED IN ME THAT I SPEAK FOR THE MEMBERS OF THIS COUNCIL AND THE CITIZENRY OF AESCYLOT.

THE DECISION-- UNANIMOUS.

YOREN OF THE FAMILY OF THE THIRD DESCENDANTS, YOU ARE HEREBY DISMISSED OF YOUR POSITION OF PROVINCE CONSUL OF THE LIANO REGION.

BUT FIRST, TO RID THE PEOPLE OF THE TRUE DISEASE WHICH PLAGUES THEM.



YOU'RE CORRECT, OSLOE.

THE DECISION HAS BEEN MADE.

BUT NOT BY YOU.

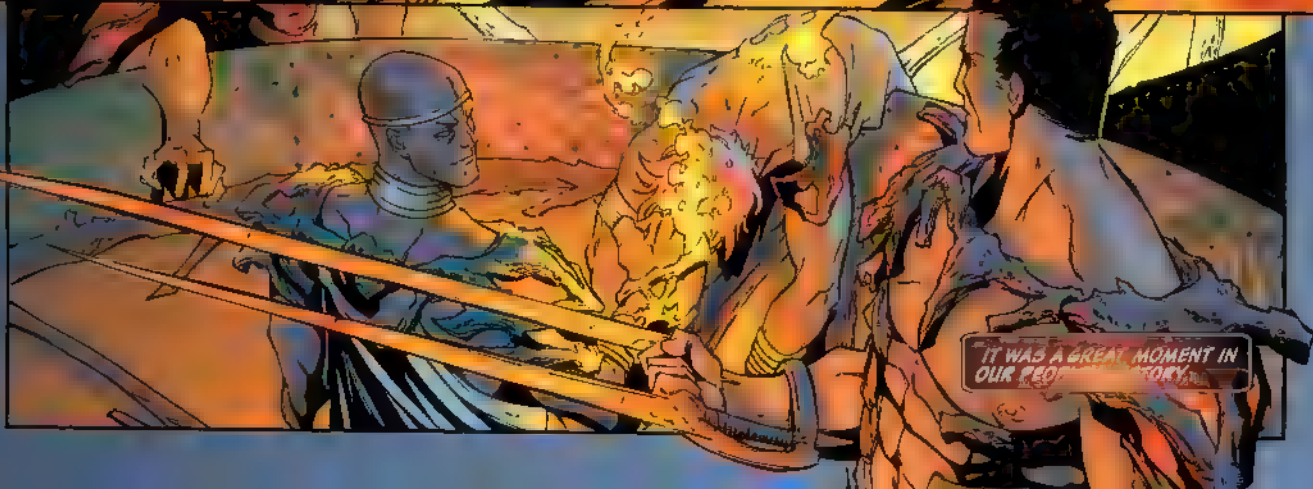


OR THE PEOPLE.

... ALTHOUGH YOU WILL NOT BE ALIVE TO WITNESS IT.

NO!

OUR ONE TRUE GOD IS RETURNING TO STAKE HER CLAIM AND RETURN AESCYLOT TO IT'S FORTUNE AND LOST PROMINENCE...





...BUT NOT
AS GRAND AS
HER RETURN
WILL BE.

I'D BE LYING IF I
SAID I WASN'T ALL TOO
ANXIOUS. IF SHE IS INDEED
THE GODDESS KIRA, I
WOULDN'T KNOW WHAT
TO SAY.

YOU SAY
NOTHING.

WE ARE HER
SLAVES AND WE
AWAIT HER
ORDERS.



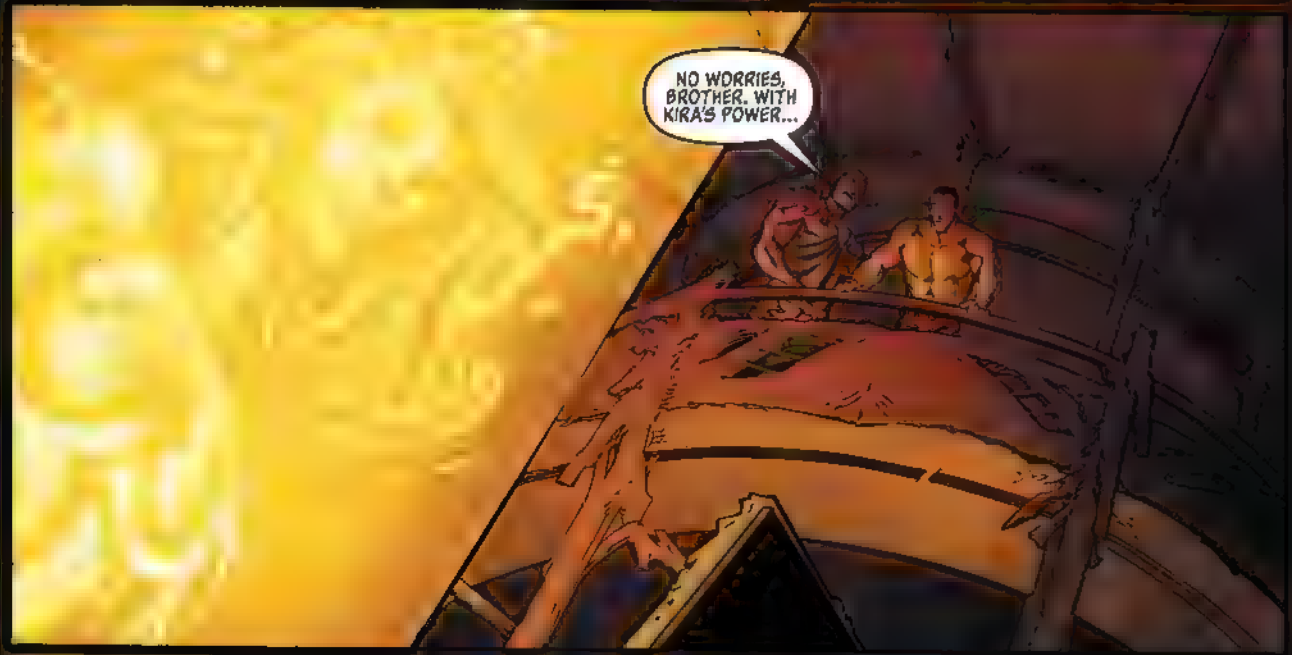
BESIDES, YOUR
CHARGE IS TO
PROTECT THE
BOUNDARIES DURING
THE WORSHIPPING.



EXCELLENT.



I'M MUCH
BETTER SUITED FOR
DEFENSE THAN
DEVOTION.



NO WORRIES,
BROTHER. WITH
KIRA'S POWER...

...OUR STRUGGLE
FINAL END.

HOW.

HOW...

...HOW DO THE
BLADES KEEP
BURNING?

UNBELIEVABLE,
YES?

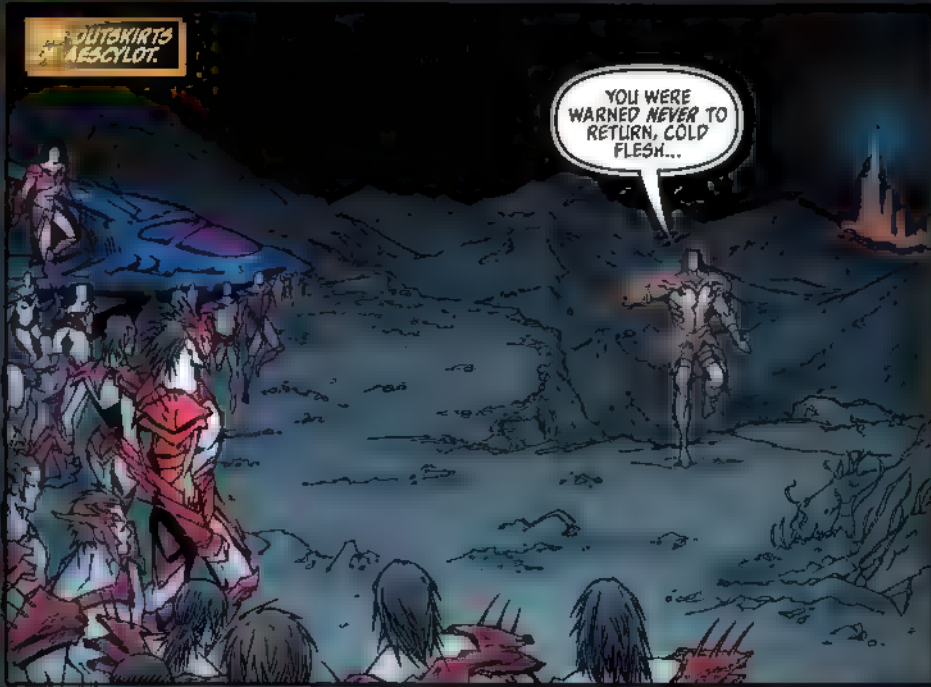
BUT WHO AM I
TELLING THIS TO? OF
COURSE YOUR BLADE BURNS
EVER BRIGHTLY. THE SUBSTANCE
CAME TO US SOME TIME AGO
HERALDING YOUR IMMINENT
RETURN.

YOUR HILT
NEVER LEFT ITS
SACRED RESTING
PLACE.

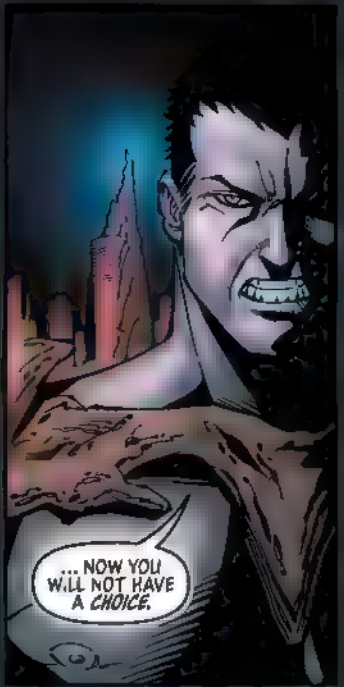
IT WAS
ONLY A MATTER OF
PUTTING THE PIECES
TOGETHER.

WE'VE FOUGHT TO
THE DEATH TO PROTECT
THE SUBSTANCE FROM THE
INNER COLONIES. IT IS OUR
ONLY HOPE FOR OUR
FUTURE SURVIVAL.

DID YOU SAY...
SUBSTANCE?



YOU WERE
WARNED NEVER TO
RETURN, COLD
FLESH...



... NOW YOU
WILL NOT HAVE
A CHOICE.



WHERE'S
OUR POINT OF
ATTACK?



LEAVE THE TALKER
TO ME. WE MUST MAKE
OUR WAY PAST THE
LEGION AND INTO THE CITY.
RETRIEVING KILLIAN AND
THE GRAY MATTER IS
OUR ONLY CONCERN.

UNDERSTOOD.



BUT
FIRST...



...WE MUST SURVIVE!





WHAT
SUBSTANCE
ARE YOU
REFERRING TO?

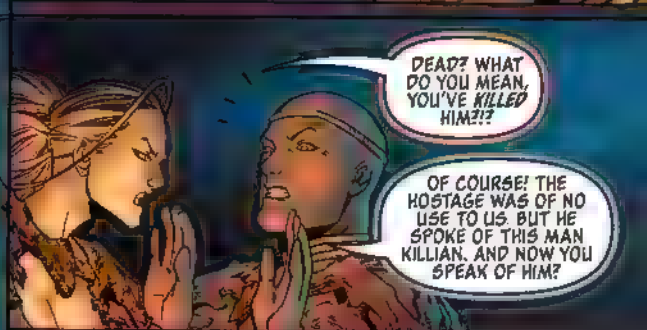
BECAUSE
YOU'RE CORRECT,
I'VE COME FOR A
MATERIAL.

I'VE COME
FOR THE ARTICLE
OF MY FATHER,
KILLIAN.



KILLIAN?

SO YOU KNOW?
THE DEAD HOSTAGE
WAS CORRECT. IT
IS KILLIAN.

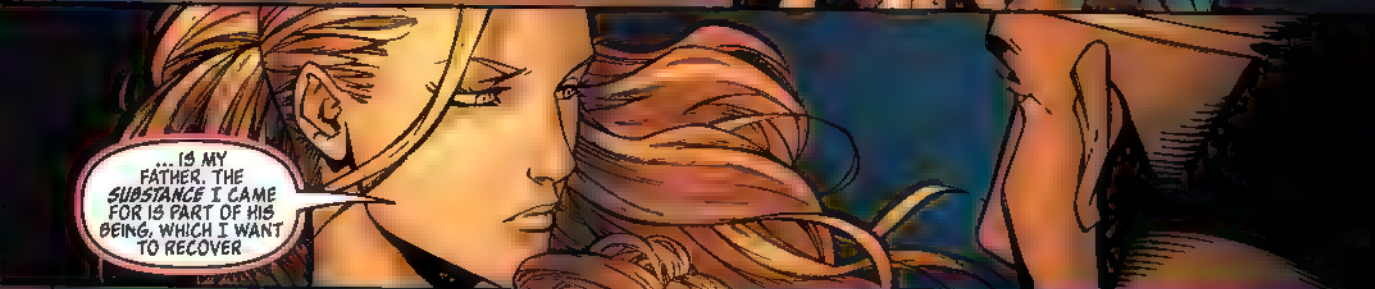


DEAD? WHAT
DO YOU MEAN,
YOU'VE KILLED
HIM???

OF COURSE! THE
HOSTAGE WAS OF NO
USE TO US. BUT HE
SPOKE OF THIS MAN
KILLIAN. AND NOW YOU
SPEAK OF HIM?



OH.
KILLIAN...



... IS MY
FATHER. THE
SUBSTANCE I CAME
FOR IS PART OF HIS
BEING, WHICH I WANT
TO RECOVER



KIRA.

YOU'VE ALREADY
RECOVERED THE SUBSTANCE.
THE MATTER HAS BEEN FUSED
WITH YOUR HILT. YOUR BLADE
FOREVER BURNS FROM THE
POWER OF THE
MATERIAL.



WHAT???

THE GRAY
MATTER *IS* MY FATHER,
NOT SOME PART OF
YOUR SICK RELIGIOUS
DEVOTION!

I'M TAKING
THIS BACK
WITH ME!

AND DON'T
TRY TO STOP
ME!



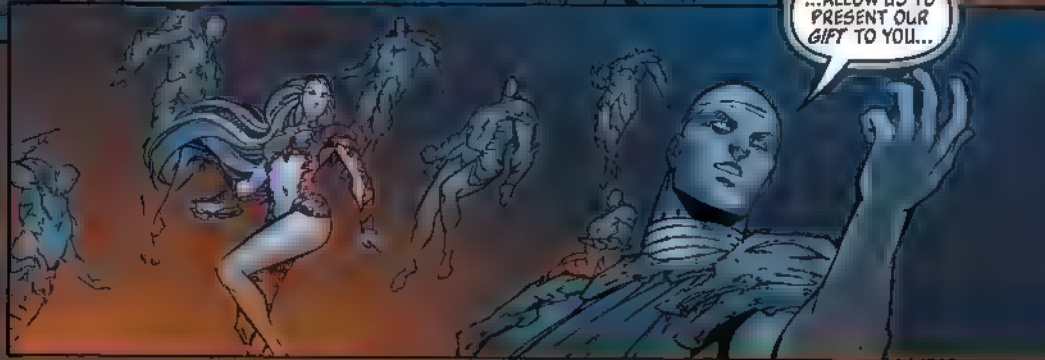
KIRA.

IT'S KIANI--
NOT KIRA!

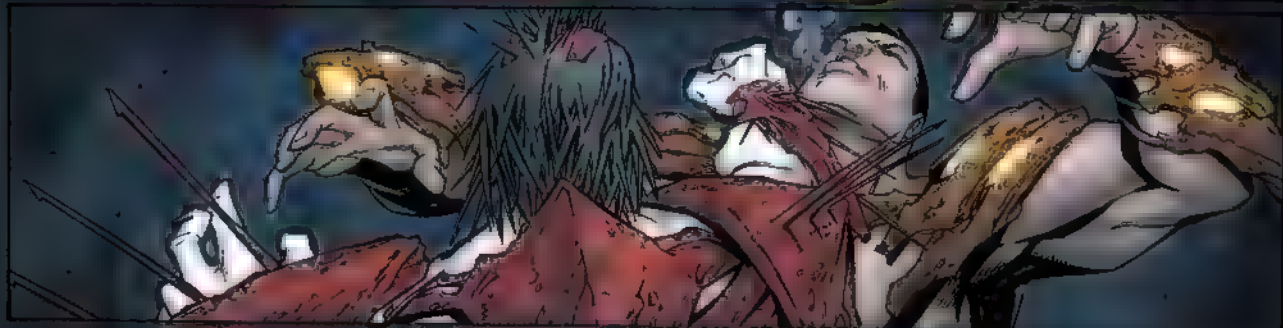
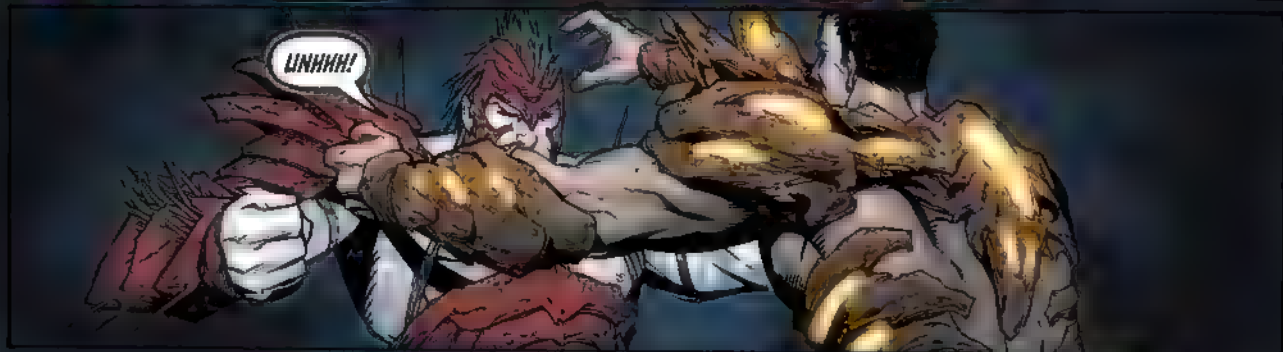
DON'T BE
CONCERNED I KNOW
YOU'RE CONFUSED OUR
PEOPLE... AESCYLOT IS
NOT THE DIVINE CITY
YOU ONCE INHABITED
ANYMORE.

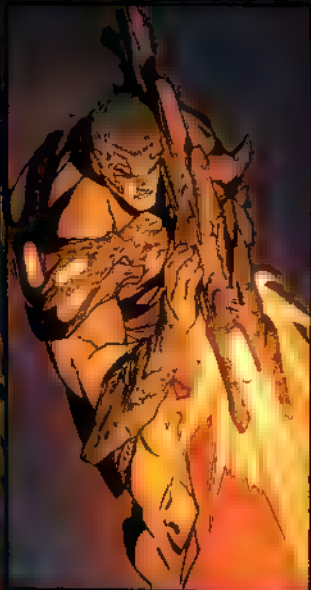
BUT PLEASE,
BEFORE YOU MAKE
YOUR DIVINE
JUDGEMENT...

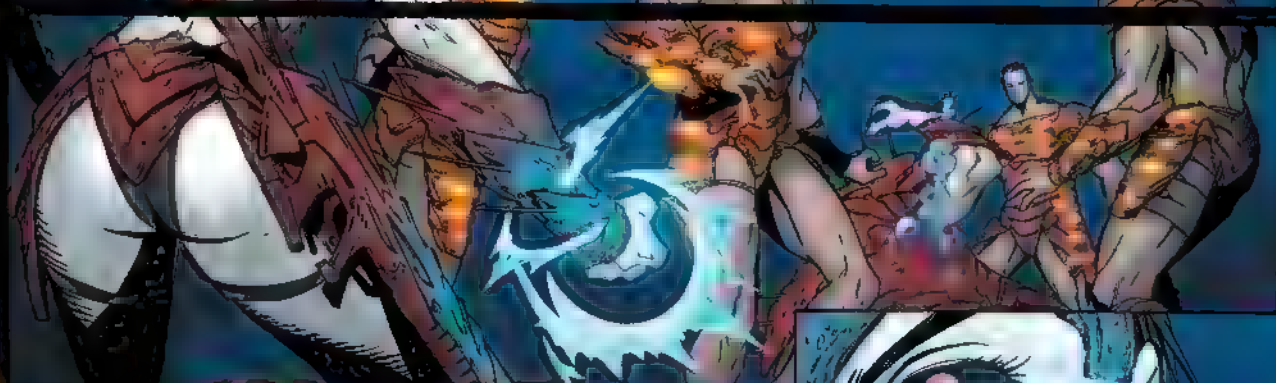
...ALLOW US TO
PRESENT OUR
GIFT TO YOU...

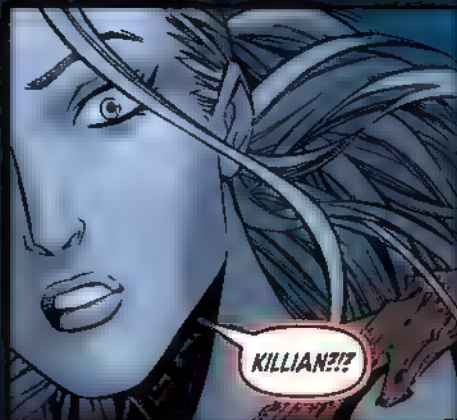




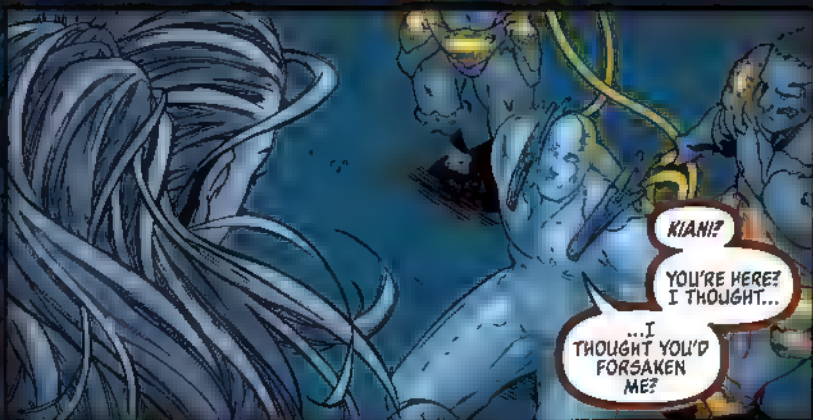








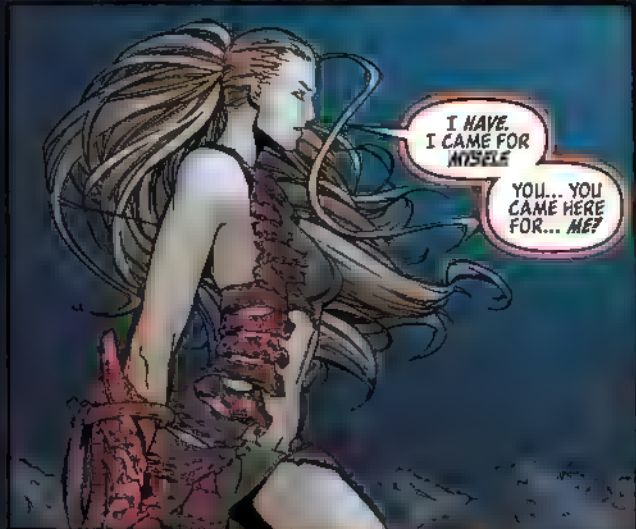
KILLIAN???



KIANI?

YOU'RE HERE?
I THOUGHT...

...I
THOUGHT YOU'D
FORSAKEN
ME?



I HAVE.
I CAME FOR
MYSELF

YOU... YOU
CAME HERE
FOR... ME?



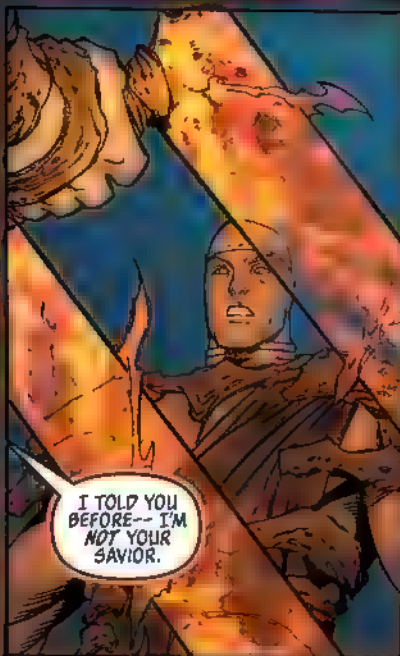
YOU ARE MY
DAUGHTER. I'D DIE
TO PROTECT
YOU.

BUT IT'S TOO
LATE. YOU MUST
LEAVE ON YOUR
OWN.

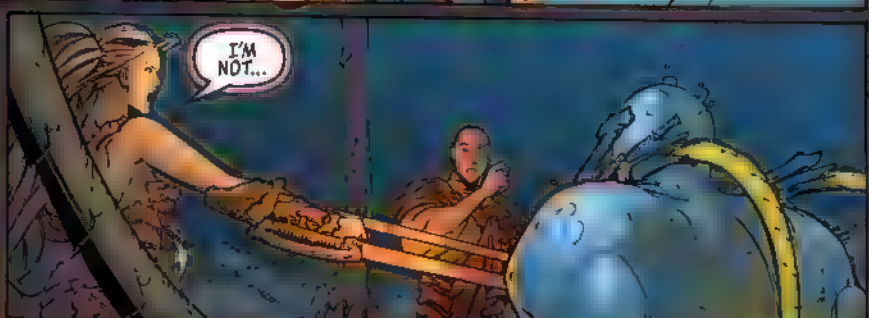


YOU WOULD
LEAVE???

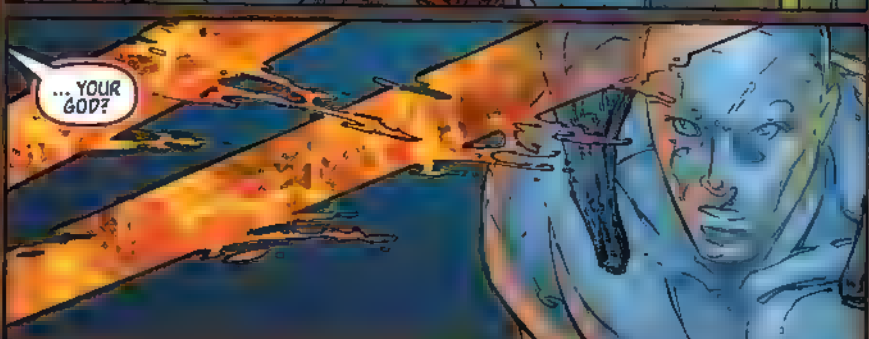
EVEN
AFTER WE'VE
PRESENTED YOU
THIS GIFT OF
SACRIFICE???



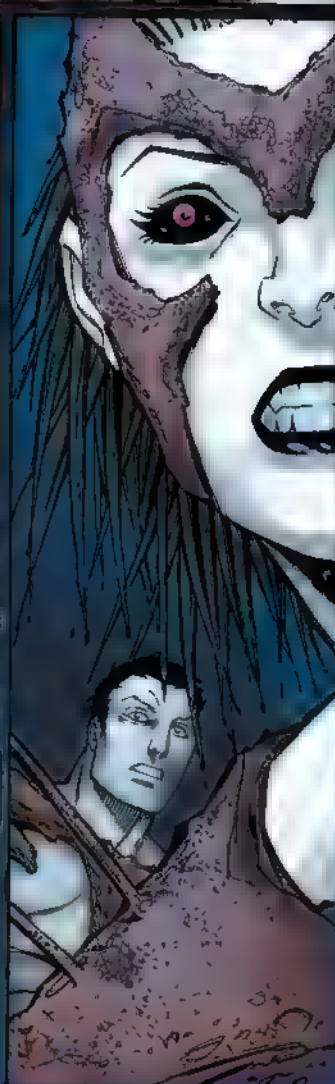
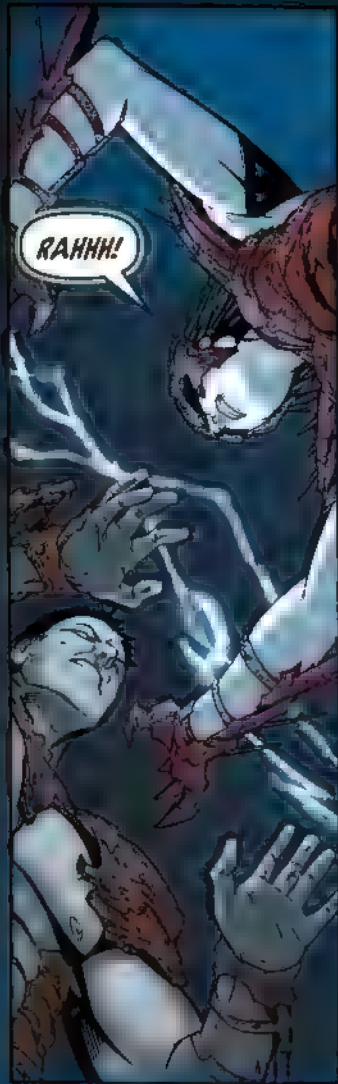
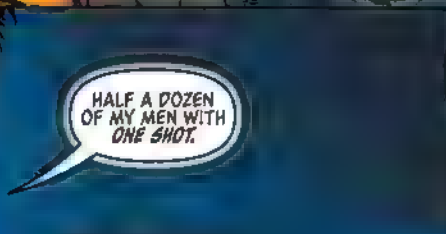
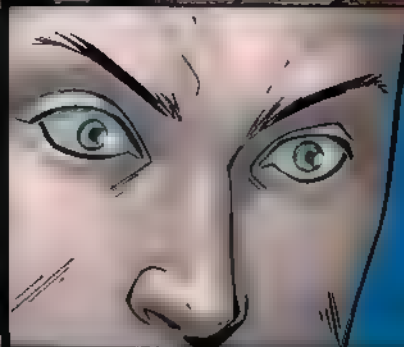
I TOLD YOU
BEFORE-- I'M
NOT YOUR
SAVIOR.



I'M
NOT...



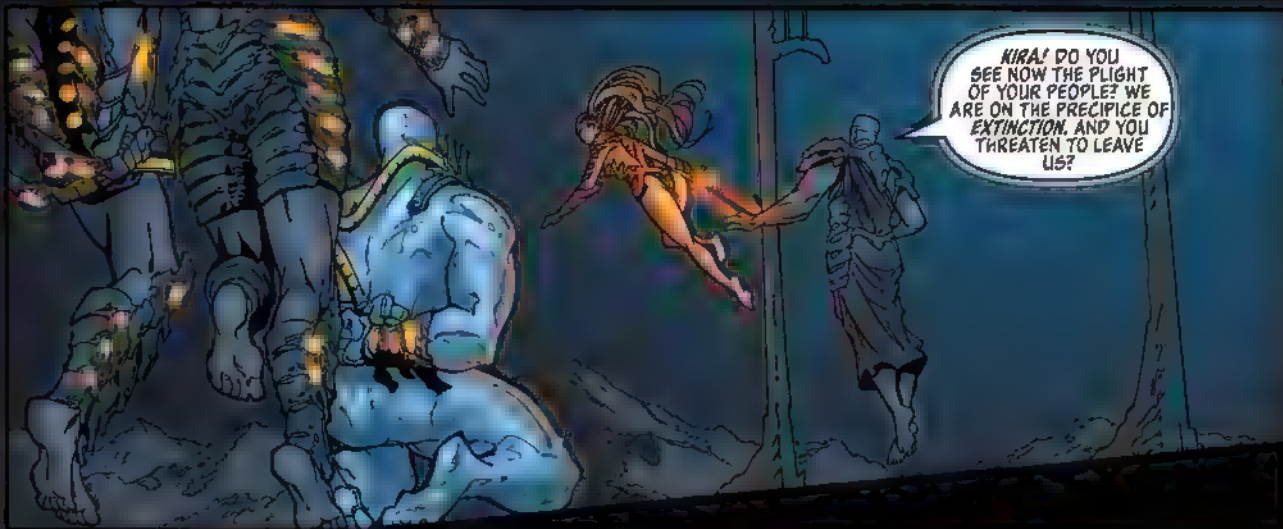
... YOUR
GOD?



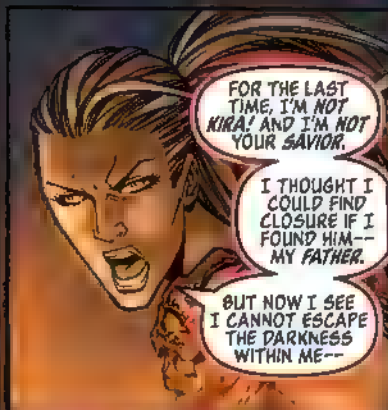








KIRA! DO YOU SEE NOW THE PLIGHT OF YOUR PEOPLE? WE ARE ON THE PRECIPICE OF EXTINCTION, AND YOU THREATEN TO LEAVE US?



FOR THE LAST TIME, I'M NOT KIRA! AND I'M NOT YOUR SAVIOR.

I THOUGHT I COULD FIND CLOSURE IF I FOUND HIM-- MY FATHER.

BUT NOW I SEE I CANNOT ESCAPE THE DARKNESS WITHIN ME--

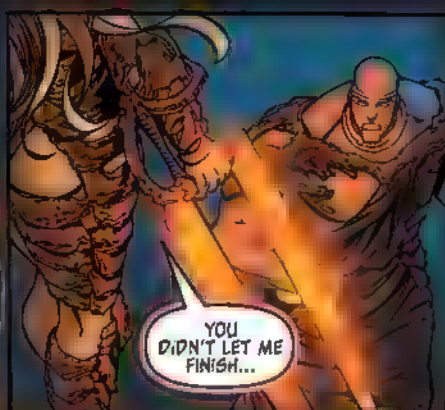


--IF YOU LEAVE, I WILL FINISH THE SACRIFICE MYSELF. REST ASSURED, YOU ARE HOME. YOUR BLADE IS HERE TO STAY!

KILLIAN, FATHER-- WHATEVER YOU WANT TO CALL HIM... CONSIDER HIM DECEASED.

IT WILL BE OUR LIFEBLOOD!

IT WILL PROVIDE US HEAT FOR AN INFINITE AMOUNT OF CYCLES.

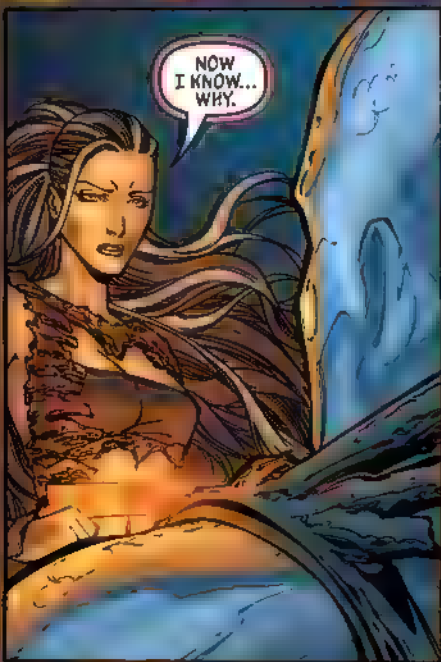


YOU DIDN'T LET ME FINISH...



... I NOW KNOW WHAT I'M MEANT TO DO. WHY I WAS GIVEN SUCH POWER. WHY IT RELENTLESSLY WANTS OUT.

WHY DEATH FOLLOWS ME AROUND EVERY TIDE.

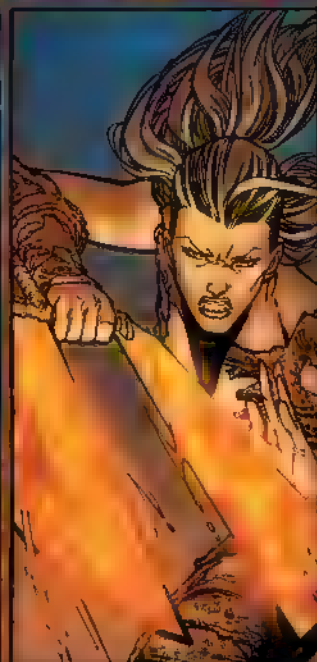


NOW I KNOW... WHY.



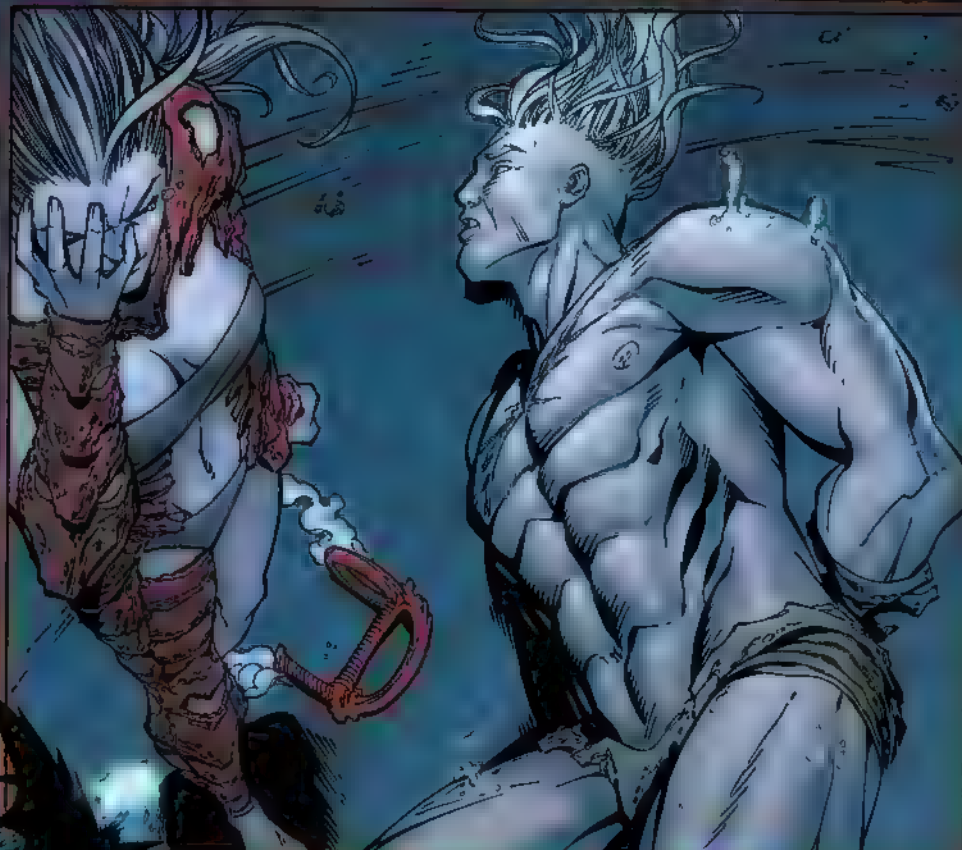
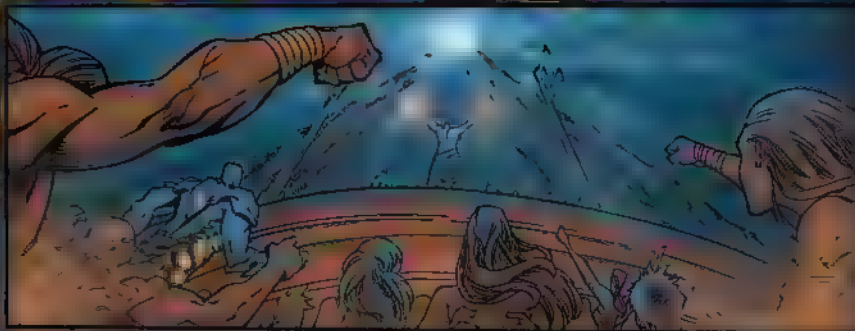
DON'T HESITATE.

IT'S THE ONLY WAY.





AAAAHHH!



DESCEND UPON THE
CITY OF AESCYLOT.
FRIENDS OF THE
CITY OF AESCYLOT
CAN SAVE US.

I ONLY
WANT
A
LIFE
FOR
AS
MUCH
AS
I
CAN
GIVE.

BEEN A RACE
BETWEEN
US
AND
THE
CITY
OF
AESCYLOT.

YOU WERE
GIVEN A PASS,
AESCYLOT.

DECADES
AGO.

KILLIAN IS A BLUE
AS YOU ARE. BUT IN
HIS CORE HE WAS AS
ONE OF US.

HOWEVER TIME
HAS NOT MADE
YOUR PEOPLE ANY
WISER.

AND YOUR
CITY WILL PAY
THE DEBT FOR
HIS MURDER.

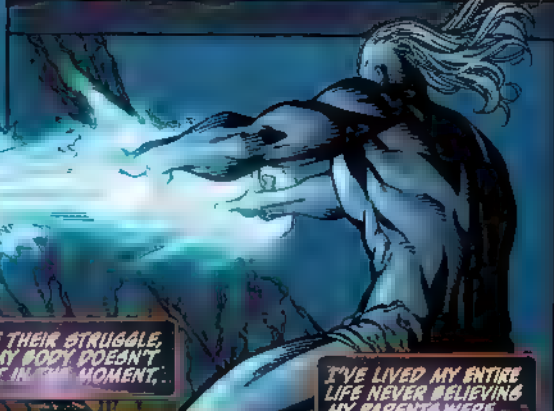
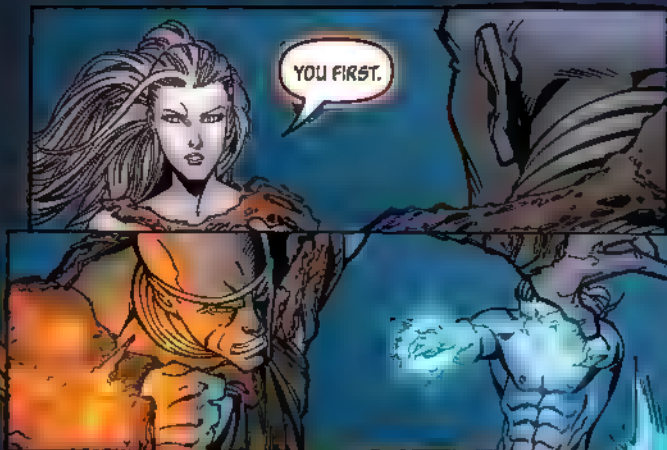
NO! DO NOT
ATTACK HIM! WE
CANNOT WIN
THIS FIGHT!

YOU WERE
SUPPOSED TO BE
OUR SAVIOR. HOW CAN
YOU ALLOW US TO
PERISH LIKE THIS?

YOU ARE
NOT KIRA!

YOU ARE
A FALSE HOPE NO
BETTER THAN EVERY OTHER
FALSITY FLOODING OUR
CIVILIZATION!!

YOU WILL
DIE FOR YOUR
SINS!!!



I SEE THEIR STRUGGLE,
BUT MY BODY DOESN'T
REACT IN THE MOMENT...

I'VE LIVED MY ENTIRE
LIFE NEVER BELIEVING
MY PARENTS WERE
ALIVE

...BUT I'VE
ALWAYS
KNOWN



LIVING WITH MY PARENTS
FOREVER LOST-- I FOUND
NOTHING BUT EMPTINESS.

HOWEVER, WHEN I PIERCED
KILLIAN'S FLESH, THE
REALIZATION STRUCK ME AS
PAINFULLY AS DID HIM.

I DECIDED THEN...

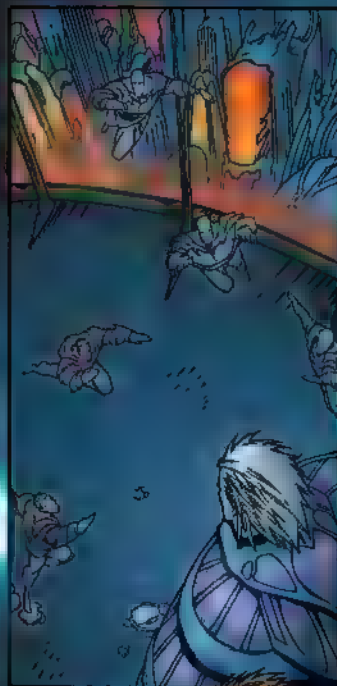


I WILL NOT LOSE
THEM AGAIN



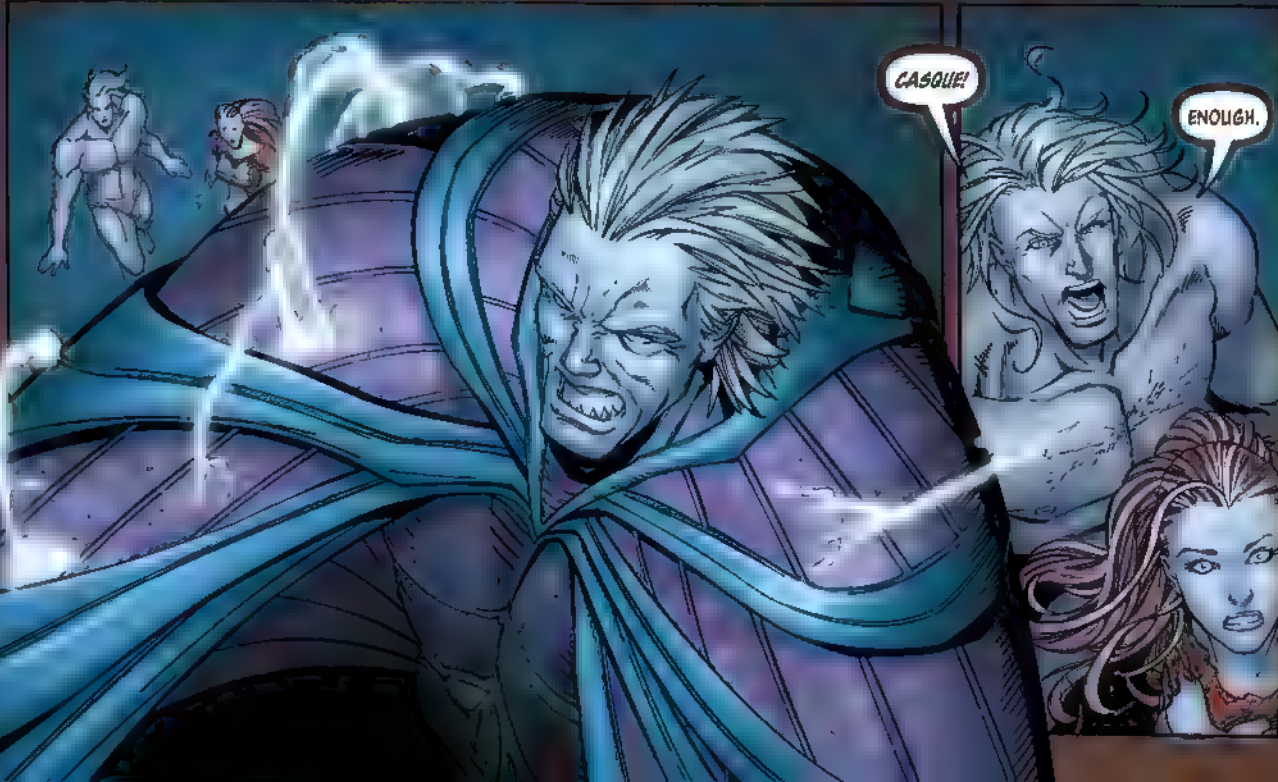
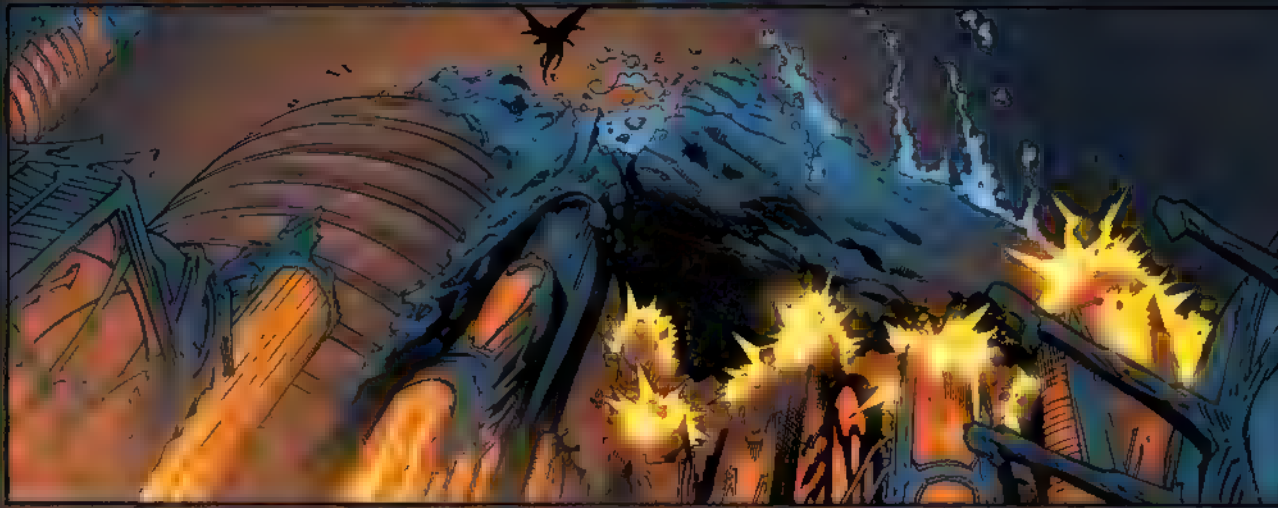
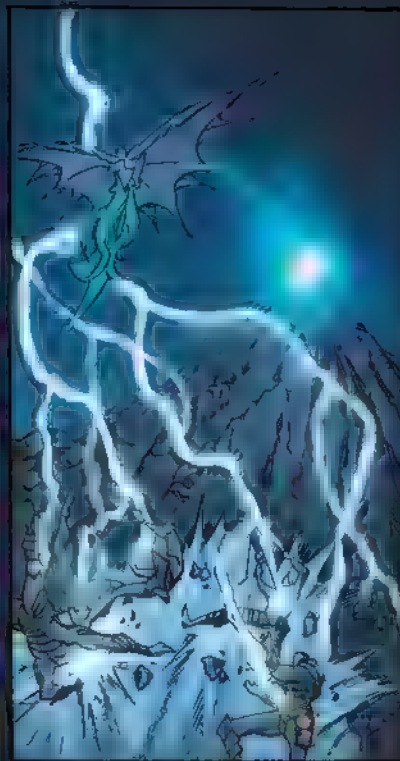
ARGGHH!

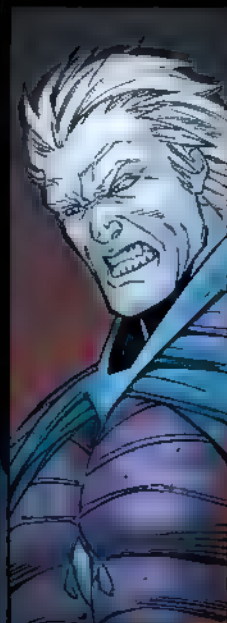




THEY DO
NATUR

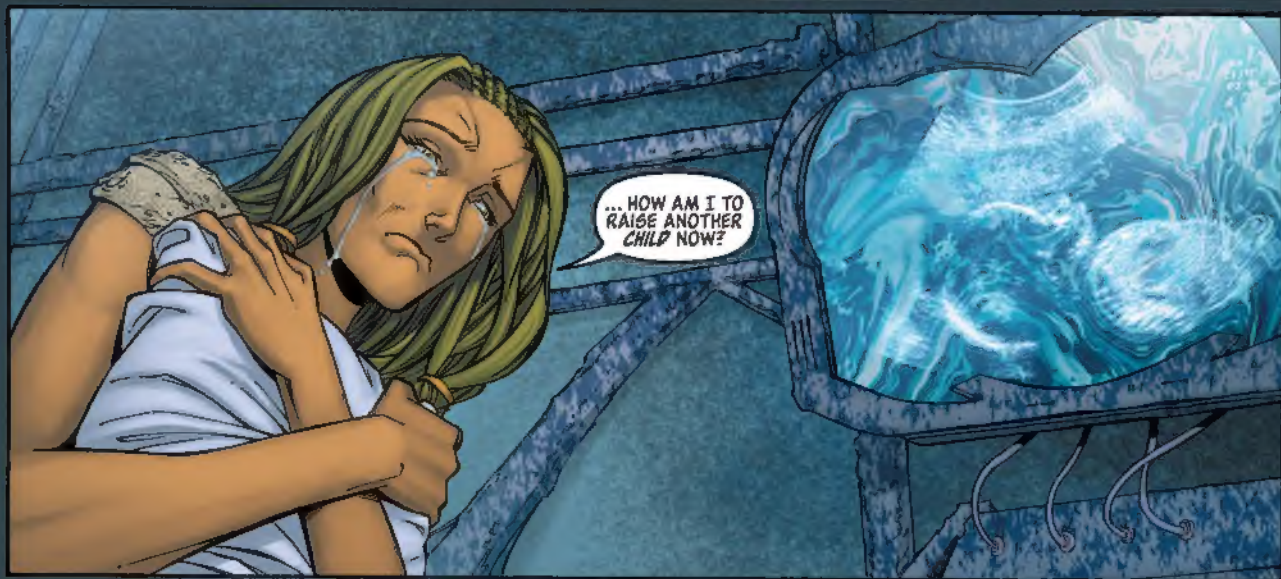
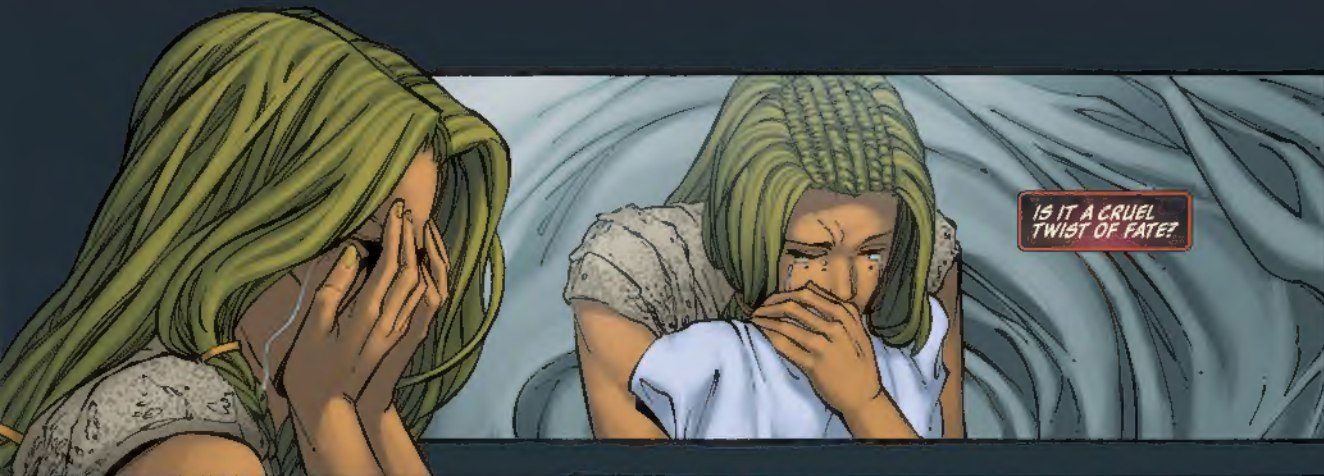
THE





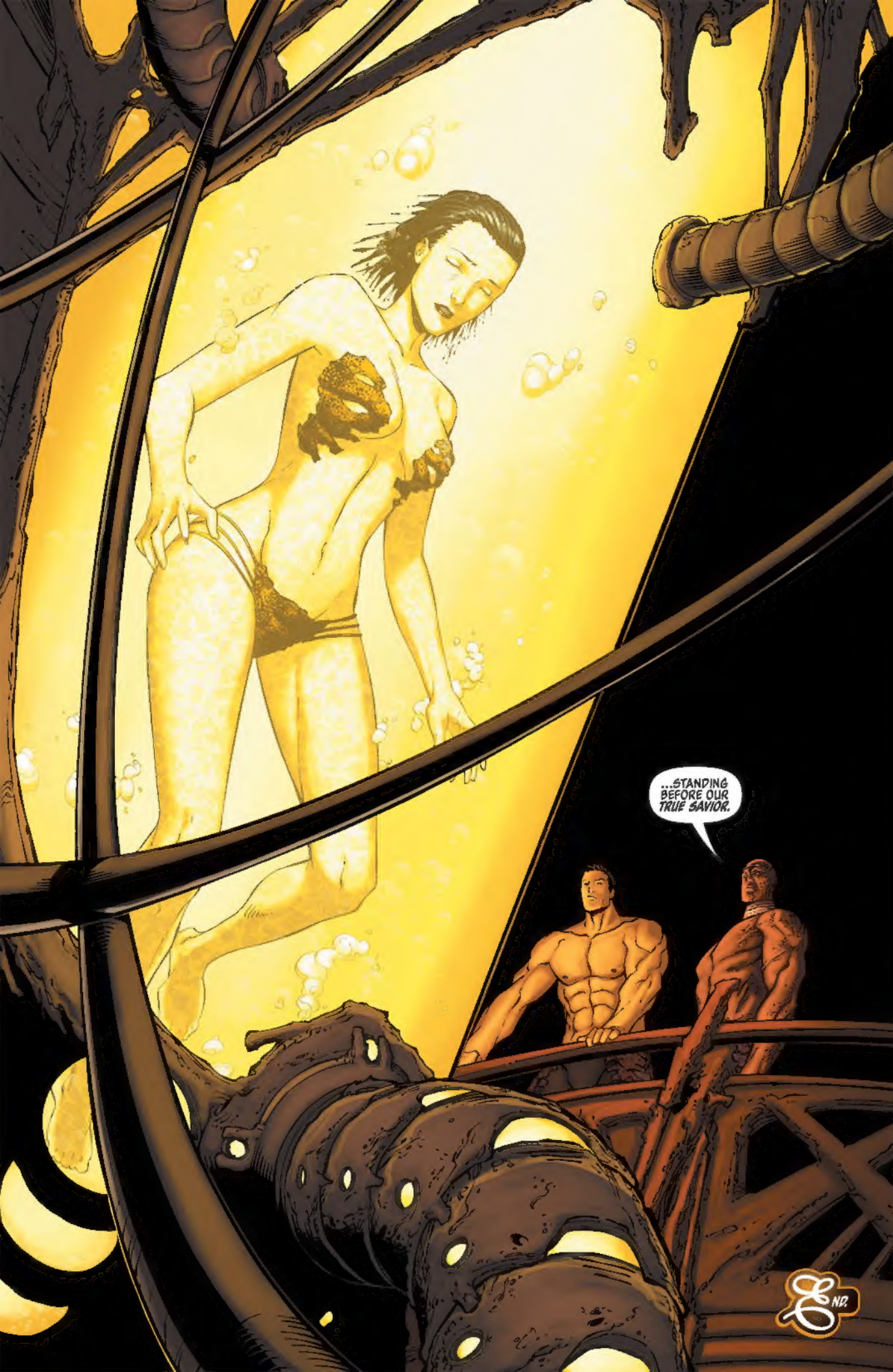






EPILOGUE:





...STANDING
BEFORE OUR
TRUE SAVIOR.